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KIRKE WHITE'S POEMS,  
LETTERS AND PROSE  
FRAGMENTS

UNHAPPY White! while life was in its spring,  
And thy young muse just waved her glorious wing,  
The spoiler swept that soaring Lyre away,  
Which else had sounded an immortal lay.  
Oh! What a noble heart was here undone,  
When Science 'self destroyed her favourite son!  
Yes, she too much indulged thy fond pursuit,  
She sowed the seeds, but Death has reaped the fruit.  
'Twas thine own Genius gave the final blow,  
And helped to plant the wound that laid thee low:  
So the struck Eagle, stretched upon the plain,  
No more through rolling clouds to soar again,  
Viewed his own feather on the fatal dart,  
And winged the shaft that quivered in his heart;  
Keen were his pangs, but keener far to feel  
He nursed the pinion which impelled the steel;  
While the same plumage that had warmed his nest  
Drank the last life-drop of his bleeding breast.

—BYRON.

(*English Bards, and Scotch  
Reviewers*, ll. 831-848).

POEMS, LETTERS AND  
PROSE FRAGMENTS  
OF  
KIRKE WHITE

EDITED WITH AN INTRODUCTION

BY

JOHN DRINKWATER



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TO  
JOHN EDWIN SANDYS, Litt.D.  
FELLOW OF ST JOHN'S COLLEGE AND PUBLIC ORATOR  
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

THIS EDITION OF  
KIRKE WHITE'S POEMS  
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## PREFACE

THE text followed in this edition is that of the first edition of *The Remains of Henry Kirke White*, Volumes I. and II. of which were published in 1807, and Volume III. in 1822. The text of the poems included in the *Clifton Grove* volume, published in 1803, has been collated with that edition. I have made no alteration to the text beyond rectifying some obvious mistakes of spelling and punctuation, save in one or two instances where I have followed later texts, which I have duly noted.

The few letters included have been selected as throwing light upon the poet's character and life, but not without regard to their literary value.

The facts given in the biographical note are, as I therein state, almost entirely taken from Southey's *Memoir*, but I must also acknowledge my indebtedness to Dr J. E. Sandys and the Rev. W. A. Cox, Fellows of St John's College, Cambridge, for some items derived from a reprint of the article contributed by them to *The Eagle* for December 1906, in connection

with the centenary of Kirke White's death, which was commemorated at Nottingham on November 21. I further thank Dr Sandys (the representative of St John's on that occasion), for the trouble he has kindly taken in revising part of the present volume. He has, *inter alia*, indicated the source of the Greek quotations on pages xvi and 262, and has corrected the misprints of the original text in both passages.

The footnotes to the text are White's, except those marked S., which are Southey's, and those to which I have referred above.

J. D.

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## BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

TO the facts of Kirke White's life, as related by Southey in the memoir prefixed to his edition of *The Remains of Henry Kirke White* of 1807, nothing of importance is likely to be added. Southey was at the time in direct communication with White's family, and it is extremely unlikely that anything escaped him that would materially affect our judgment of his subject as a poet. This note, therefore, makes no pretence to being more than a summary of the biographical portion of the memoir in question.

Henry Kirke White was born at Nottingham, 21st March 1785. His father, John White, was a butcher, and his mother, *née* Mary Neville, was of a Staffordshire family of good repute. The poet was their second son.

At the age of three he was sent to school, and from his earliest years the love of reading, that was with him till his death, was manifested. At seven years we find him teaching the servant to read and write, and at the same age he wrote a tale of a Swiss emigrant, which has not been

preserved. About this time he was sent to what was then the best school in Nottingham, kept by the Rev. John Blanchard. One day he wrote a separate exercise for each boy in the class, and the standard of that day's work was pronounced by the master to be higher than it had ever been before. At this school he learnt French, besides the usual routine subjects. He was considered to be unusually fortunate in having so good an education provided for him, and he made the most of his opportunities. His father was intent upon bringing him up to his own business, and one whole day in the week and his leisure hours on others were employed in carrying the butcher's basket; but his mother more readily perceived the boy's early promise, and opposed her husband's plan from the first, with ultimate success. Some difference arising between Mr Blanchard and the poet's father, Henry was removed from the school of the former, and placed under a Mr Shipley. Shipley was quick to recognise his pupil's parts, and his report greatly relieved White's family, who had been sorely worried by same ill-conceived charge brought against the boy by an usher at his former school.

At the age of fourteen White left school, and his father so far conceded to Mrs White's wishes as to allow him to be placed in a stocking-loom rather than the butcher's shop. For a year he shone and folded up stockings, was

very miserable, and occasionally wrote poetry. His mother, by strenuous efforts—his father was still unable to appreciate the need of any change—at length arranged for her son to enter the office of Messrs Coldham & Enfield, attorneys and town clerks of Nottingham. There was no money to pay his premium, so that he engaged to serve two years before becoming articled, which he was early in 1802. From this date (1800) began the incessant brainwork which was to continue until the end of his short life six years later.

His employers advised him that a knowledge of Latin would be of service to him in his new profession. His leisure from business was very small, but in less than a year he could read Horace, knew some Greek, Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese, and was not unacquainted with chemistry, astronomy, electricity, mechanics, drawing and music! He would not take his supper with his family—he could not afford the time. His mother endeavoured to restrain this tremendous application, but to no purpose, and slowly the body began to wear beneath the too ardent spirit. During this period much of his poetry was written, and he contributed to the *Monthly Preceptor* and the *Monthly Mirror*.

After several attempts, which failed on account of his youth, he succeeded in obtaining admission to the Nottingham Literary Society, and forthwith astonished the worthy members by

discoursing upon Genius for two hours without any notes, for which effort he was elected 'Professor of Literature' to the Society.

His contributions to the *Monthly Mirror* attracted the notice of Capel Lofft, and other men of some consequence in the literary world of their day, and they recommended him to prepare a selection of his poems for the press. He now greatly desired to go up to Oxford or Cambridge ; he hoped that publication, if successful, might help him to this end, and he accordingly acted upon the suggestion. He applied to the Countess of Derby for permission to dedicate the work to her, but she refused, saying that it was her invariable rule to do so. She, nevertheless, enclosed 2*l.* as her subscription to the volume. The Duchess of Devonshire subsequently accepted the dedication, although not until the manuscript had nearly been lost through her oversight ; but, when a copy of the volume was sent to her, she took no further notice. That the manuscript was not lost whilst at Devonshire House was due to the solicitude of Neville White, the poet's brother, who, after calling several times in vain, installed himself in the servants' hall, whence he refused to move until, after four hours, he attained his object. After this, White was inclined to dispense with the dedication, but his friends urged him not to do so, and t last Neville obtained an interview with the

Duchess, with the result mentioned. In 1803 *Clifton Grove, a Sketch in Verse, with Other Poems*, by Henry Kirke White of Nottingham, was published by Vernor & Hood, of London, with the following dedication :

TO HER GRACE  
THE DUCHESS OF DEVONSHIRE,  
THE FOLLOWING  
TRIFLING EFFUSIONS  
OF A VERY YOUTHFUL MUSE  
ARE BY PERMISSION DEDICATED,  
BY HER GRACE'S  
MUCH OBLIGED AND GRATEFUL SERVANT,  
HENRY KIRKE WHITE.

*Nottingham.*

The preface is here reprinted, and we cannot do better than allow Southey to tell the history of the little volume in his own words.

#### PREFACE

THE following attempts in Verse are laid before the public with extreme diffidence. The Author is very conscious that the juvenile efforts of a youth, who has not received the polish of Academical discipline, and who has been but sparingly blessed with opportunities for the prosecution of scholastic pursuits, must

necessarily be defective in the accuracy and finished elegance which mark the works of the man who has passed his life in the retirement of his study, furnishing his mind with images, and at the same time attaining the power of disposing those images to the best advantage.

The unpremeditated effusions of a boy, from his thirteenth year, employed, not in the acquisition of literary information, but in the more active business of life, must not be expected to exhibit any considerable portion of the correctness of a Virgil, or the vigorous compression of a Horace. Men are not, I believe, frequently known to bestow much labour on their amusements: and these Poems were, most of them, written merely to beguile a leisure hour, or to fill up the languid intervals of studies of a severer nature.

Ἦας το οἰκεῖος ἐργον ἀγαπᾶω,<sup>1</sup> 'Every one loves his own work,' says the Stagyrte; but it was no overweening affection of this kind which induced this publication. Had the author relied on his own judgment only, these Poems would not, in all probability, ever have seen the light.

Perhaps it may be asked of him, what are his motives for this publication? He answers—simply these: The facilitation, through its means, of those studies which, from his earliest infancy, have been the principal objects of his ambition, and the increase of the capacity to pursue those inclinations which may one day place him in an honourable station in the scale of society.

The principal poem in this little collection (*Clifton*

---

<sup>1</sup> Dr Sandys has drawn my attention to the fact that this quotation, which is incorrectly printed, comes from Aristotle's *Ethics*, ix. 7 3, πᾶς γὰρ τὸ οἰκεῖον ἐργον ἀγαπᾶ. See also White's letter to his brother, p. 172, *infra*.

*Grove*) is, he fears, deficient in numbers, and harmonious coherency of parts. It is, however, merely to be regarded as a description of a nocturnal ramble in that charming retreat, accompanied with such reflections as the scene naturally suggested. It was written twelve months ago, when the author was in his sixteenth year. The *Miscellanies* are some of them the productions of a very early age. Of the *Odes*, that *To an Early Primrose* was written at thirteen—the others are of a later date.—The sonnets are chiefly irregular; they have, perhaps, no other claim to that *specific* denomination than that they consist only of fourteen lines.

Such are the poems, towards which I entreat the lenity of the public. The critic will doubtless find in them much to condemn; he may likewise, possibly, discover something to commend. Let him scan my faults with an indulgent eye, and in the work of that correction which I invite, let him remember he is holding the iron Mace of Criticism over the flimsy superstructure of a youth of seventeen, and remembering that, may he forbear from crushing by too much rigour the painted butterfly, whose transient colours may otherwise be capable of affording a moment's innocent amusement.

H. K. WHITE.

*Nottingham.*

Henry sent his little volume to each of the then existing *Reviews*, and accompanied it with a letter, wherein he stated what his advantages had been, and what were the hopes which he proposed to himself from the publication: requesting from them that indulgence of which his productions did not stand in need, and which it might have been thought, under such circumstances, would not have been withheld from works of less promise. It may be well conceived with what anxiety he looked for their opinions, and with what feelings

he read the following article in the *Monthly Review* for February, 1804.

*Monthly Review*, February, 1804

'The circumstances under which this little volume is offered to the public, must, in some measure, disarm criticism. We have been informed, that Mr White has scarcely attained his eighteenth year, has hitherto exerted himself in the pursuit of knowledge under the discouragements of penury and misfortune, and now hopes, by this early authorship, to obtain some assistance in the prosecution of his studies at Cambridge. He appears, indeed, to be one of those young men of talents and application who merit encouragement: and it would be gratifying to us, to hear that this publication had obtained for him a respectable patron, for we fear that the mere profit arising from the sale cannot be, in any measure, adequate to his exigencies as a student to the university. A subscription, with a statement of the particulars of the author's case, might have been calculated to have answered his purpose; but, as a book which is to "win its way" on the sole ground of its own merit, this poem cannot be contemplated with any sanguine expectation. The author is very anxious, however, that critics should find in it something to commend, and he shall not be disappointed: we commend his exertions, and his laudible endeavours to excel; but we cannot compliment him with having learned the difficult art of writing good poetry.

'Such lines as these will sufficiently prove our assertions:

"Here would I run a visionary boy,  
When the hoarse thunder shook the vaulted sky,  
And, fancy led, beheld the Almighty's form  
Sternly *careering* in the eddying storm."

'If Mr White should be instructed by Alma Mater, he will, doubtless, produce better sense, and better rhymes.'

I know not who was the writer of this precious article. It is certain that Henry could have no personal enemy. His volume fell into the hands of some dull man, who took it up in an hour of ill-humour, turned over the leaves to look for faults, and finding that *Boy* and *Sky* were not orthodox rhymes, according to his wise creed of criticism, sat down to blast the hopes of a boy, who had confessed to him all his hopes and all his difficulties, and thrown himself upon his mercy. With such a letter before him (by mere accident I saw that which had been sent to the *Critical Review*), even though the poems had been bad, a good man would not have said so; he would have avoided censure, if he had found it impossible to bestow praise. But that the reader may perceive the wicked injustice, as well as the cruelty of this reviewal, a few specimens of the volume, thus contemptuously condemned because *Boy* and *Sky* are used as rhymes in it, shall be inserted in this place.

(Here follow extracts from the poems.)

An author is proof against reviewing, when, like myself, he has been reviewed above seventy times; but the opinion of a reviewer upon his first publication has more effect, both upon his feelings and his success, than it ought to have, or would have, if the mystery of the *ungentle craft* were more generally understood. Henry wrote to the Editor, to complain of the cruelty with which he had been treated. This remonstrance produced the following answer in the next month.

*Monthly Review*, March, 1804

ADDRESS TO CORRESPONDENTS

'In the course of our long critical labours, we have necessarily been forced to encounter the resentment, or withstand the lamentations of many disappointed authors; but we have seldom, if ever, been more affected, than by a letter from Mr White, of Nottingham, complaining of the tendency of our strictures on his poem of *Clifton Grove*, in our last number. His expostulation is written with a warmth of feeling in which we truly sympathise, and which shall readily excuse, with us, some expressions of irritation: but Mr White must receive our most serious declaration, that we did "judge of the book by the book itself"; excepting only, that, from his former letter, we were desirous of mitigating the pain of that decision which our public duty required us to pronounce. We spoke with the utmost sincerity when we stated our wishes for patronage to an unfriended man of talents, for talents Mr White certainly possesses, and we repeat those wishes with equal cordiality. Let him still trust that, like Gifford, (see preface to his translation of Juvenal,) some Mr Cookesley may yet appear to foster a capacity which endeavours to escape from its present confined sphere of action; and let the opulent inhabitants of Nottingham reflect, that some portion of that wealth which they have worthily acquired by the habits of industry, will be laudably applied in assisting the efforts of the mind.'

Henry was not aware that reviewers are infallible. His letter seems to have been answered by a different writer: the answer has none of the commonplace and vulgar insolence of the criticism; but to have made any concession, would have been admitting that a

review can do wrong, and thus violating the fundamental principle of its constitution.

The poems which had been thus condemned, appeared to me to discover strong marks of genius. I had shown them to two of my friends, than whom no persons living better understand what poetry is, nor have given better proofs of it; and their opinion coincided with my own. I was fully convinced of the injustice of this criticism, and having accidentally seen the letter which he had written to the reviewers, understood the whole cruelty of their injustice. In consequence of this, I wrote to Henry to encourage him: told him, that though I was well aware how imprudent it was in young poets to publish their productions, his circumstances seemed to render that expedient, from which it would otherwise be right to dissuade him: advised him therefore, if he had no better prospects, to print a larger volume by subscription, and offered to do what little was in my power to serve him in the business. To this he replied in the following letter.

‘I dare not say all I feel respecting your opinion of my little volume. The extreme acrimony with which the *Monthly Review* (of all others the most important) treated me, threw me into a state of stupefaction: I regarded all that had passed as a dream, and I thought that I had been deluding myself into an idea of possessing poetic genius, when in fact I only had the longing, without the *afflatus*. I mustered resolution enough, however, to write spiritedly to them: their answer in the ensuing number was a tacit acknowledgment that they had been somewhat too unsparing in their correction. It was a poor attempt to salve over a wound wantonly and most ungenerously inflicted. Still I was damped, because I knew the work was very respectable, and

therefore could not, I concluded, give a criticism *grossly* deficient in equity—the more especially, as I knew of no sort of inducement to extraordinary severity. Your letter, however, has revived me, and I do again venture to hope that I may still produce something which will survive me.

‘With regard to your advice and offers of assistance, I will not attempt, because I am unable, to thank you for them. To-morrow morning I depart for Cambridge, and I have considerable hopes that, as I do not enter into the university with any sinister or interested views, but sincerely desire to perform the duties of an affectionate and vigilant pastor, and become more useful to mankind, I therefore have hopes, I say, that I shall find means of support *in the university*. If I do not, I shall certainly act in pursuance of your recommendations; and shall, without hesitation, avail myself of your offers of service, and of your directions.

‘In a short time this will be determined; and when it is, I shall take the liberty of writing to you at Keswick, to make you acquainted with the result.

‘I have only one objection to publishing by subscription, and confess it has weight with me. It is, that in this step, I shall seem to be acting upon the advice so unfeelingly and contumeliously given by the Monthly Reviewers, who say what is equal to this—that had I gotten a subscription for my poems before their merit was known, I might have succeeded; provided, it seems, I had made a *particular statement of my case*; like a beggar, who stands with his hat in one hand, and a full account of his cruel treatment on the coast of Barbary in the other, and so gives you his penny sheet for your sixpence, by way of half purchase, half charity.

‘I have materials for another volume, but they were written principally while *Clifton Grove* was in press, or soon after, and do not now at all satisfy me. Indeed,

of late, I have been obliged to desist, almost entirely, from converse with the dames of Helicon. The drudgery of an attorney's office, and the necessity of preparing myself, in case I should succeed in getting to college, in what little leisure I could boast, left no room for the flights of the imagination.'

In another letter he speaks, in still stronger terms, of what he had suffered from the unfeeling and iniquitous criticism.

'The unfavourable review (in the *Monthly*) of my unhappy work, has cut deeper than you could have thought; not in a literary point of view, but as it affects my respectability. It represents me actually as a *beggar*, going about gathering money to put myself at college, when my book is worthless; and this with every appearance of candour. They have been sadly misinformed respecting me; this review goes before me wherever I turn my steps; it haunts me incessantly, and I am persuaded it is an instrument in the hands of Satan to drive me to distraction. I must leave Nottingham.'

It is not unworthy of remark, that this very review, which was designed to crush the hopes of Henry, and suppress his struggling genius, has been, in its consequences, the main occasion of bringing his *Remains* to light, and obtaining for him that fame which assuredly will be his portion. Had it not been for the indignation which I felt at perusing a criticism at once so cruel and so stupid, the little intercourse between Henry and myself would not have taken place; his papers would probably have remained in oblivion, and his name, in a few years, have been forgotten.

Three causes contributed to White's desire to enter one of the Universities: his natural love of learning, a deafness which militated against

success in his profession, and a wish to enter the Church. The religious struggle and doubts, through which every active mind passes, had led him to orthodox Christianity, partly through the influence of R. W. Almond, afterwards rector of St Peter's, Nottingham. With characteristic thoroughness he wished to be of the greatest service he could to his newly-found faith—he would be a clergyman. A University training he looked upon as essential to this end, and thenceforth all his efforts were in that direction. Almond, who went up to Cambridge in 1803, succeeded in obtaining influence at that university on White's behalf, and, in view of his prospects of being able to attain his desire, Messrs Coldham & Enfield generously agreed to allow him to break his contract with them, so soon as he might be able to make arrangements to enter Cambridge, and, further, allowed him a month's leave of absence to recruit his health. This holiday he spent at Wilford, a village on the banks of the Trent, near to his beloved Clifton Grove. Very shortly after this, however, he learnt that the endeavours on his behalf had failed, and, in spite of the disappointment, he returned to his law work with renewed determination and vigour. He worked incessantly. After his day at the office he would read till one, two, or three o'clock in the morning, and rise again at five to study; sometimes he would not sleep at all. The

earnest entreaties of his mother could do nothing to check this terrible strain of overwork, and the inevitable breakdown followed. From this he recovered largely through the revival of his aspirations towards Cambridge.

He obtained an introduction to Charles Simeon, Fellow of King's College, and after his interview he obtained that gentleman's promise of a sizarship at St John's, and an annual sum of 30*l.* to be subscribed by himself and a friend. Neville White promised an additional 20*l.*, and it was hoped that his mother would be able to allow him 15*l.* or 20*l.* more. Shortly afterwards he was induced to apply to the Elland Society—instituted for the purpose of training promising men for the ministry—and he was duly examined by a body of clergymen. He satisfied their requirements as to his theological and classical knowledge, and religious views ; and this fact, together with the tribute that had been paid to him by Southey, caused his name to be placed in the books of the Society. He came away from the interview, however, oppressed by a sense of formality and dependence, and when Mr Simeon, on being acquainted with the facts, insisted on his adhering to the original arrangement, he gladly did so.

In October, 1804, he left Messrs Coldham and Enfield, who were sincerely sorry to lose him, as they themselves testified. He went to Winteringham in Lincolnshire to study under

the Rev. L. Grainger for a year before taking up his residence at Cambridge, and there he continued the same relentless application, until illness again made relaxation imperative. In the following October he left for Cambridge with a store of learning that was astonishing, but with health shattered beyond any permanent recovery.

The remaining year of his life was a continuance of the same tale of boundless energy, liberal scholastic success, and distressing disregard of his physical welfare. Southey shall again speak in his own words.

During his first term, one of the University Scholarships became vacant, and Henry, young as he was in college, and almost self-taught, was advised, by those who were best able to estimate his chance of success, to offer himself as a competitor for it. He passed the whole term in preparing himself for this, reading for college subjects in bed, in his walks, or, as he says, where, when, and how he could, never having a moment to spare, and often going to his tutor without having read at all. His strength sunk under this, and though he had declared himself a candidate, he was compelled to decline; but this was not the only misfortune. The general college examination came on; he was utterly unprepared to meet it, and believed that a failure here would have ruined his prospects for ever. He had only about a fortnight to read what other men had been the whole term reading. Once more he exerted himself beyond what his shattered health could bear; the disorder returned, and he went to his tutor, Mr Catton, with tears in his eyes, and told him that he could not go into the hall

to be examined. Mr Catton, however, thought his success here of so much importance, that he exhorted him, with all possible earnestness, to hold out the six days of the examination. Strong medicines were given him to enable him to support it, and he was pronounced the first man of his year. But life was the price which he was to pay for such honours as these, and Henry is not the first young man to whom such honours have proved fatal. He said to his most intimate friend, almost the last time he saw him, that were he to paint a picture of Fame, crowning a distinguished undergraduate after the senate-house examination, he would represent her as concealing a Death's head under a mask of beauty.

When this was over he went to London. London was a new scene of excitement, and what his mind required was tranquillity and rest. Before he left college, he had become anxious concerning his expenses, fearing that they exceeded his means. Mr Catton perceived this, and twice called him to his rooms, to assure him of every necessary support, and every encouragement, and to give him every hope. This kindness relieved his spirits of a heavy weight, and on his return he relaxed a little from his studies ; but it was only a little. I found among his papers the day thus planned out :—  
' Rise at half-past five. Devotions and walk till seven. Chapel and breakfast till eight. Study and lectures till one. Four and a half clear reading. Walk, &c. and dinner, and Woolaston, and chapel to six. Six to nine, reading—three hours. Nine to ten, devotions. Bed at ten.'

The exercise which Henry took was no relaxation ; he still continued the habit of studying while he walked, and in this manner, while he was at Cambridge, committed to memory a whole tragedy of Euripides. Twice he distinguished himself in the following year, being

again pronounced first at the great college examination, and also one of the three best theme writers, between whom the examiners could not decide. The college offered him, at their expense, a private tutor in mathematics during the long vacation; and Mr Catton, by procuring for him exhibitions to the amount of 66*l.* per ann. enabled him to give up the pecuniary assistance which he had received from Mr Simeon and other friends. This intention he had expressed in a letter, written twelve months before his death. 'With regard to my college expenses, (he says,) I have the pleasure to inform you that I shall be obliged, in strict rectitude, to wave the offers of many of my friends. I shall not even need the sum Mr Simeon mentioned, after the first year; and it is not impossible that I may be able to live without any assistance at all. I confess I feel pleasure at the thought of this, not through any vain pride of independence, but because I shall then give a more unbiassed testimony to the truth, than if I were *supposed* to be bound to it by any ties of obligation or gratitude. I shall always feel as much indebted for intended as for actually afforded assistance; and though I should never think a sense of thankfulness an oppressive burden, yet I shall be happy to evince it, when *in the eyes of the world* the obligation to it has been discharged.' Never, perhaps, had any young man, in so short a time excited such expectations; every University honour was thought to be within his reach; he was set down as a medallist, and expected to take a senior wrangler's degree; but these expectations were poison to him, they goaded him to fresh exertions when his strength was spent. His situation became truly miserable! to his brother, and to his mother, he wrote always that he had relaxed in his studies, and that he was better; always holding out to them his hopes and his good fortune: but to the most intimate of his friends (Mr Maddock) his letters told a

different tale : to him he complained of dreadful palpitations—of nights of sleeplessness and horror, and of spirits depressed to the very depth of wretchedness, so that he went from one acquaintance to another, imploring society, even as a starving beggar entreats for food. During the course of this summer, it was expected that the Mastership of the Free-School at Nottingham would shortly become vacant. A relation of his family was at that time Mayor of the town ; he suggested to them what an advantageous situation it would be for Henry, and offered to secure for him the necessary interest. But, though the salary and emoluments are estimated at from 4 to 600*l.* per annum, Henry declined the offer ; because, had he accepted it, it would have frustrated his intentions with respect to the ministry. This was certainly no common act of forbearance in one so situated as to fortune, especially as the hope which he had most at heart, was that of being enabled to assist his family, and in some degree requite the care and anxiety of his father and mother, by making them comfortable in their declining years.

The indulgence shown him by his college, in providing him a tutor during the long vacation, was peculiarly unfortunate. His only chance of life was from relaxation, and home was the only place where he would have relaxed to any purpose. Before this time he had seemed to be gaining strength ; it failed as the year advanced. He went once more to London to recruit himself—the worst place to which he could have gone ; the variety of stimulating objects there hurried and agitated him, and when he returned to college, he was so completely ill, that no power of medicine could save him. His mind was worn out, and it was the opinion of his medical attendants, that if he had recovered, his intellect would have been affected. His brother Neville was just at this time to have visited him. On his first seizure, Henry

found himself too ill to receive him, and wrote to say so ; he added, with that anxious tenderness towards the feelings of a most affectionate family which always appeared in his letters, that he thought himself recovering. But his disorder increased so rapidly, that this letter was never sent ; it was found in his pocket after his decease. One of his friends wrote to acquaint Neville with his danger : he hastened down ; but Henry was delirious when he arrived.—He knew him only for a few moments ; the next day sunk into a state of stupor ; and on Sunday, October 19th, 1806, it pleased God to remove him to a better world, and a higher state of existence.

After his death the whole of his papers were committed to the charge of Southey, with the result that the two volumes of *Remains* were published in 1807, which were supplemented by a third volume in 1822.

The curious in such matters may still see the house in Exchange Alley, Nottingham, where White was born. Until recently, it was occupied as an inn, 'The Kirke White', and a much worn portrait of the poet still remains as the sign. A tablet briefly records the fact of White's birth at the house ; this latter was lately bought by the City Corporation, and is at present untenanted. It is to be hoped that it will be put to some not unworthy use.

The rooms that the poet occupied at St John's were attic rooms, probably those known as No. 8 on staircase F in the third Court, or those immediately opposite ; they look out on to the

College Library. There is a pleasant tradition in the College that, when White's health finally broke down, it was thought that to climb so many stairs daily would be injurious to him, and that he was moved to more convenient quarters on the ground floor, known as No. 1 on staircase K in the first Court, below the Silver Bell.

The church where he was buried—All Saints—no longer stands, but the site is enclosed, and there may still be seen the plain stone slab, bearing the name 'Henry Kirke White', with the recent addition—'Died, October 19, 1806'.

Some years after the poet's death, Dr Francis Boott, an American, whose countrymen have always liberally recognised White's talents, placed in the church a marble tablet, surmounted by a medallion by Chantrey, and bearing the following lines by William Smyth, the Cambridge Professor of Modern History.

Warm with fond hope and learning's sacred flame,  
To Granta's bowers the youthful poet came :  
Unconquered powers the immortal mind displayed :  
But, worn with anxious thought, the frame decayed ;  
Pale o'er his lamp, and in his cell retired,  
The martyr student faded and expired !  
O, genius, taste, and piety sincere,  
Too early lost, midst studies too severe !  
Foremost to mourn was generous Southey seen ;  
He told the tale, and showed what White had been :  
Nor told in vain. Far o'er the Atlantic wave  
A wanderer came, and sought the poet's grave ;

On yon low stone he saw his lonely name,  
And raised this fond memorial to his fame.

This memorial was removed to the New Chapel of St John's in 1869, when All Saints Church was pulled down.

Professor Sedgwick, writing in 1868, thus recalls the poet's personal appearance: 'Whenever I met him in the street I was impressed by his look and bearing. He was a tall, thoughtful-looking young man, with fine features, and a complexion that seemed to indicate a life of severe study. A month or two before his death I met him several times in society. His manners well matched his character. They were simple, earnest, winning and unaffected. He had the look of a man of genius. So far as regards his features, Chantrey's medallion gives a good general notion of them.'

J. D.

## CRITICAL INTRODUCTION

FOR some forty years after his death, the poetry of Henry Kirke White enjoyed a very considerable popularity, and this during a period that was productive of a series of poets whose names must for ever mark one of our most glorious epochs of verse. Great poets and critics combined with the cultured public of the day in lamenting White's untimely death, not only for sentimental reasons natural to such an occasion, but also because they believed a harvest of really considerable poetry had been lost to the world. Southey, Coleridge and Wordsworth<sup>1</sup> were agreed in this opinion; Byron,

<sup>1</sup> Southey's words are these: 'The poems which had been thus condemned, appeared to me to discover strong marks of genius. I had shown them (the poems) to two of my friends, than whom no persons living better understand what poetry is, nor have given better proofs of it, and their opinion coincided with my own.' Although he does not mention the names of his friends, the presumptive evidence that Coleridge

whose praise was not lightly given, had, even in his bitterest mood, nothing but admiration for the promise that was displayed in White's work, and the several editions of the *Remains* testified to the appreciation of the public.

The latter half of the nineteenth century, however, saw a change from this attitude. In 1844, R. H. Horne, in his *New Spirit of the Age*, thought fit to disparage the 'thin gruel of Kirke White' by contrasting it with the 'pure Greek wine of Keats,' and from that time one critic has followed another in either ignoring White altogether or summarily dismissing his poetry as worthless. It will be my endeavour in the following pages to show that this judgment is neither just nor critically sound.

At the outset let it be said that the present edition does not include by any means all of the poems printed in Southey's three volumes of *The Remains of Henry Kirke White*, the first two volumes of which were published in 1807 and the third in 1822.

The highest praise is due to Southey for and Wordsworth are meant is strong. Coleridge and Southey were living together at the time of the publication of *Clifton Grove*, and Wordsworth was close at hand. 'Nor have given better proofs of it': to which other of his friends at that date would Southey thus refer?

the spirit which prompted him to his task, and for the ability which he applied to it; at the same time it is abundantly clear that he erred in printing far too many of the papers entrusted to him after the poet's death. Many of the poems included in Southey's selection are indeed quite worthless, and, although it cannot perhaps be claimed that this fact has prejudiced the opinions of discriminating critics, there can be no doubt that it has considerably diminished the degree of favour that has in later years been accorded to White by the more general public.

In this connection it must be borne in mind that Kirke White's case presents certain features peculiar to itself. The only publication in his name that appeared during his lifetime and under his own supervision was the slender volume entitled *Clifton Grove, a Sketch in Verse, with Other Poems*, printed in 1803, and we may be sure that little or nothing that he had written at that date and that was excluded from this selection, was worth printing. While it is true that in the long run a poet is the nicest critic of his own work, it is eminently untrue until such time as he can see that work in proper perspective, and a young poet in preparing his efforts for the press will almost without exception be rather too indulgent than too severe in the matter of self-criticism. Apart from this general principle it must be remembered that, in the ordinary course of

events, Kirke White would not have published his book at this particular time. But he was ambitious, and he was poor. He needed money to enable him to prosecute his studies, and he turned to his poetry in the hope that it would supply this want, confessing that he felt that the due time for the step had not yet arrived. We are, therefore, justified in concluding that, had he lived, his maturer judgment would have revised his youthful selection, and in this edition, I have, therefore, ventured to omit nearly all the pieces that White himself rejected, together with a few that he printed.

There is no evidence that the poems written after the publication of *Clifton Grove* were ever revised by their author for the press ; had this been the case, there is little doubt that many of them would have been destroyed. Southey himself says ‘Undoubtedly many (of his poems) have been chosen which he himself would not have published, and some few which, had he lived to have taken that rank among English poets which would assuredly have been within his reach, I also should then have rejected among his posthumous papers.’ He states that his reason for printing the pieces in question is that they mark either the state or progress of the poet’s mind ; but this is quite unconvincing, and he clearly acted against his own better judgment. Here, again, I have endeavoured to rectify what seems to me to

have been an error on Southey's part, and so give to readers of this new edition only such of White's poems as I believe he himself would have recognised in later life as worthy expressions of his genius.

I do not, of course, suggest for one moment that it is desirable that poets should be represented by their best work only, although I do believe that, broadly speaking, by this they should finally be judged. I can, however, see no good reason why a poet's worthless productions—and every poet at one time or another produces work that is of no intrinsic value—should be preserved. An author is himself generally careful that this should not be the case, and destroys much of his verse as it is written, or at least never allows it to be printed. Kirke White seems to have put his poems aside as they were completed, doubtless with a view to reconsidering them at his leisure. That leisure never came. The strenuous year at Cambridge, spent in close study, allowed him, as he himself regretfully writes, but little time for poetry. At the end of that year he died, and I humbly suggest that this edition is not, in the ordinary sense of the term, a selection of *Kirke White's Remains*, but rather *Kirke White's Remains*, as they would have appeared, had he himself supervised the publication before his early death.

In approaching a poet's work there are two distinct methods to be employed, and in each there is a real, though too rarely recognised danger, against which the critic must ever be on his guard. A judicious and clear historical estimate of a poet's aim and achievement, a definite sense of his indebtedness and relation to his predecessors and his influence upon his successors is, of course, invaluable to the student. It reveals to him the inception and progress of various verse forms, the rise and fall of diverse fashions in diction and imagery, and above all, it discloses to him a detached and bird's-eye view of the waves in which poetical thought undulates through the ages. When, however, this attitude passes from an idea of classification to one of comparison, it ceases to be wise and becomes vicious. Thus, to trace the gradual secession by Warton from the school of Pope, the more vital stir of the new movement in Gray and Collins, until we are brought up in wonder before the magic of Coleridge; thence to note the evolution of Keats and later of Tennyson; to observe how each in turn moulds the older influence to the new spirit, and sets the seal of his own genius and imagination and vision upon the product—all this is of absorbing interest and, of course, immense critical value. When, by the aid of this method, however, Keats and Tennyson—to follow the same example—

are brought together before our minds, and we misuse the occasion to wrangle as to whether Tennyson is a smaller or a greater poet than Keats, the staff which we have in our hands becomes a scourge. Such a discussion may form a more or less interesting topic of casual conversation, but, so far as criticism is concerned, it is absolutely worthless. Indeed it is worse than worthless, it is vicious as I have said, for it so often engenders a bitterness of spirit which is fatal to criticism.

'Set aside the thin gruel of Kirke White, and put to your lips the pure Greek wine of Keats.' That, in effect, was Horne's charge, and there in a single phrase is exemplified the disastrous consequence of such misapplication of the historical method. Horne appreciated the glory of Keats' poetry, and in his enthusiasm likened it to pure Greek wine, which was a happy phrase. He called upon the public to read Keats—an entirely worthy mission. Had he stopped there, we could only have approved his perspicacity. But no: there was Kirke White, who had achieved a wide popularity. After Kirke White, a greater poet than he had risen; therefore Kirke White must now be set aside. Why? The question is, I venture to say, unanswerable. Of course Kirke White was not as great a poet as Keats, but that is entirely beside the question. White accomplished a certain work, and the value of that

work would have been in nowise diminished had he been followed by a succession of Shakespeares. It is largely to this spurious method of criticism that the injustice that has of late years been done to White must be attributed, as must also the uselessness of much of our present-day reviewing. To say that a certain poem by Mr — is or is not worthy of Marlowe or Milton is not criticism, it is simply nonsense.

The bulk of White's work is so small, and most of it so immature, that a sound estimate of his historical value is exceedingly difficult. He was born at a time when English poetry was on the threshold of a new life. Warton had preached his gospel; Collins and Gray had done their work; Wordsworth and Coleridge were in their teens; Byron, Shelley and Keats were not yet born, and song seemed to be almost hushed for the moment in expectancy of the era that was to see the birth and growth of the Romantic school. To have witnessed such a transition may, at this distance of time, appear to have been an inestimable privilege for any poet, but the truth is that this is a matter which depends entirely upon the mental build of the poet in question. If his mind be mainly a constructive one, as was Shelley's, he will thrive at such a period. The decline of old ideas will throw his constructive powers into bolder relief. On the other hand, if his mind

be mainly an assimilative and interpretative one, such as Kirke White's, the conditions of such a time are all against him. Large issues, which at a distance are quite clearly marked, are difficult to distinguish close at hand, and new ideas, however vital in themselves, are apt to be overlooked in their early days by all, save their immediate conceivers. It will, therefore, generally be found that the interpretative mind, looking for nourishment to the most complete and potent system of current thought, will, in an age of great intellectual conflict, be rather influenced by the older and more transparent principles than by those which are unformed and indefinite. This being so, it would have been in no way surprising if Kirke White had been largely insensible to the new movement that was at work around him. The distinctive features of the poetry of Warton, Gray and Collins were still overshadowed by the powerful traditions of Pope and his school, as upheld by Johnson, Goldsmith and their followers. White, however, not only had an extremely active mind; he also had a remarkably fine judgment, which almost amounted to an instinct, as may be seen time after time in his letters. It was this judgment or instinct that was his poetical salvation. He certainly could never have initiated a great new movement himself, but, such a movement having been started, he was quick to appreciate its vitality long before it had come

to its full strength, and in consequence we find that the predominant influence in his work is that of the pioneers of the Romantic revival. To this revival he made a small but definite contribution.

Now, as I rove, where wide the prospect grows,  
A livelier light upon my vision flows.  
No more above, the embracing branches meet ;  
No more the river gurgles at my feet,  
But seen deep down the cliff's impending side  
Through hanging woods, now gleams its silver tide.  
Dim is my upland path,—across the Green  
Fantastic shadows fling, yet oft between  
The chequer'd glooms, the moon her chaste ray sheds,  
Where knots of blue-bells droop their grateful heads,  
And beds of violets blooming 'mid the trees,  
Load with waste fragrance the nocturnal breeze.<sup>1</sup>

Lo! on the eastern summit, clad in grey,  
Morn, like a horseman girt for travel, comes ;  
And from his tower of mist,  
Night's watchman hurries down.<sup>2</sup>

Notes like these foreshow, no matter how faintly, the great years that are to follow, and in the face of them it is impossible to treat White as a negligible quantity in the movement that was to produce a Shelley and a Keats.

The personal aspect of criticism is a thing much more intimate, and to most men more interesting. It speaks of those matters that

<sup>1</sup> *Clifton Grove.*

<sup>2</sup> *Fragment I.*

appeal to all men in all ages. The historical estimate may not be of universal interest ; the personal estimate emphatically is. To learn what the poet thinks of his relation to God and men, his reading of the eternal problems that are the glory and despair of generation after generation, to wonder and dream with him, and with him to tremble and exult—these are the things of the heart, the greater things. Here again, though, we have a danger to face ; that of an arrogant spirit. If we hope to learn all that a poet has to teach us, we must approach him humbly, or we shall certainly learn nothing. To be humble does not, of course, mean to be blind to defects, but a man of critical instinct need not fear that he will be imposed upon by these ; he will without effort recognise them as such, and they will not escape his reproof. It is, however, essential that, in reading a poet, we should not set out with the idea that all he has to say lies within the compass of our own knowledge and experience, and that he is up for judgment at the court of our superior wisdom. Having considered his work, we may be forced to the conclusion that it is valueless, but that does not affect the point in question. A critic's first function is to analyse and interpret, so far as lies in his power. Having done this, he can summarise his opinion in approval or condemnation, but statement of such an opinion without reasons is of no critical value whatever. To

attain this end, to analyse and interpret properly, we must, as I have said, approach our subject humbly, and willing to be taught. Here lies another defect of much of our modern criticism. It is too often thought sufficient to state the conclusion without the premises, while it is too rarely recognised that, after all, the poet may be greater than the critic. Most critics would, I suppose, be willing to write an estimate of Shelley, for example, and it would be perfectly legitimate for them to do so, and, in a large number of cases, the result would be informing; but how many of these same critics would have the courage to admit that, after all their careful and even affectionate study, there are still in Shelley certain elusive thoughts and emotions that they have not been able fully to grasp and realise, certain heights and depths that they have been unable to scale and fathom? Yet in every case would this be true, no matter how able the critic. One man's experience will never reach as far in all directions as another's, and remembrance of this fact is of vital importance in criticism. The greater the critic, the more fully will he realise this, the more reverently will he set out upon his work, and the more intimately will the poet reveal himself to him.

Kirke White has suffered on this ground; more than one critic has in recent years assumed towards him this false attitude of

which I speak, has been disappointed in consequence, and has been content to record the fact in a single note of condemnation. He has, of course, every right to the opinion, but we, too, have a right in the matter ; we must require to know why that opinion was formed, or refuse to accept it as criticism worthy of consideration.

White's poetry is marked by a melancholy and sadness, noble in unfaltering faith and in absolute lack of fear.

What is this passing scene ?  
 A peevish April day !  
 A little sun—a little rain,  
 And then night sweeps along the plain,  
 And all things fade away.  
 Man (soon discuss'd)  
 Yields up his trust,  
 And all his hopes and fears lie with him in the dust.

\*            \*            \*            \*

Come, Disappointment, come !  
 Thou art not stern to me ;  
 Sad Monitress ! I own thy sway,  
 A votary sad in early day,  
 I bend my knee to thee.  
 From sun to sun  
 My race will run,  
 I only bow, and say, My God, thy will be done.<sup>1</sup>

The restlessness of commercial life, which in our own day has grown to such a distressing

<sup>1</sup> *Ode to Disappointment.*

extent, depressed him, and drove him at every available moment to Nature, whom he learnt to love with all a lover's passion.

Fair Nature ! thee, in all thy varied charms,  
Fain would I clasp for ever in my arms,  
Thine are the sweets which never, never sate,  
Thine still remain through all the storms of fate.<sup>1</sup>

Even in the solace of this communion, however, there clings to him a certain wistfulness, a sense of the tears that lie so close to the laughter of the world.

And hark ! the wind-god, as he flies,  
Moans hollow in the forest-trees,  
And sailing on the gusty breeze,  
Mysterious music dies.  
Sweet flower ! that requiem wild is mine,  
It warns me to the lonely shrine,  
The cold turf altar of the dead ;  
My grave shall be in yon lone spot,  
Where as I lie, by all forgot,  
A dying fragrance thou wilt o'er my ashes shed.<sup>2</sup>

This love for Nature was in White a very vital thing, no mere poetical pose or formula. He did actually learn of the trees and the rivers, the sunshine and the rain, the promise of dawn and the quiet of the evening, and from

<sup>1</sup> *Clifton Grove.*

<sup>2</sup> *To the Herb Rosemary.*

these he drew most of his happiest inspiration.

Beams of the daybreak faint ! I hail  
 Your dubious hues, as on the robe  
 Of night, which wraps the slumbering globe,  
 I mark your traces pale.  
 Tir'd with the taper's sickly light,  
 And with the wearying, numbered night,  
 I hail the streaks of morn divine :  
 And lo ! they break between the dewy wreathes  
 That round my rural casement twine ;  
 The fresh gale o'er the green lawn breathes,  
 It fans my feverish brow,—it calms the mental strife,  
 And cheerily re-illumes the lambent flame of life.<sup>1</sup>

That is the simple expression of personal observation and feeling, as also is

Hark how it falls ! and now it steals along,  
 Like distant bells upon the lake at eve,  
 When all is still ;<sup>2</sup>

Most of his Nature poetry is simple like this, never gorgeous, but always sincere. His treatment of such themes is entirely direct ; he is never able, as are the great poets, to see in all the workings of the natural world the symbols of eternal laws and universal harmony, but to the phases of Nature in themselves, to her beauty, her comfort and her terror, he is keenly alive, and expresses his emotions in

<sup>1</sup> *To the Morning.*

<sup>2</sup> Fragment III.

musical verse that is often of great tenderness.

He is restrained by much the same limitation when he writes of men. For their sorrows and sufferings he is full of pity, he rejoices in their achievements and nobility, but he has no sense of drama, no artistic perception of the conflict that constitutes action in literature. Thus, in passages such as the slight sketch of the hermit in the fragment beginning, 'Where yonder woods in gloomy pomp arise', and his sonnet 'Poor little one! most bitterly did pain', he is successful in his simplicity and poignancy, notwithstanding certain flaws in each instance; but when he attempts to set his figures in motion, as in the legend in *Clifton Grove*, he becomes merely melodramatic and fails. In other words, he is delicately sensitive, he is intellectually vigorous, but he is never intellectually subtle.

Of the influence which his predecessors had upon his work in general, enough has been said, but in this connection it is well to bear in mind the distinction between being influenced by, and imitating another poet. White worked upon models, it is true—every young poet must of necessity do so—but he did so unconsciously and with individuality. His *Ode to Liberty* illustrates the point more clearly than any other of his poems. The influence of Collins' ode of the same name is marked, both in matter

and treatment ; yet we can read White's poem after that of Collins with pleasure. There is no sense of imitation, rather a feeling that our debt to Collins has been increased, and that his seed has fallen on good ground.

In workmanship Kirke White maintains a very high level, and his verse, if never quite magical, is always harmonious and easy, and sometimes full-voiced and masterful.

And oh ! thy voice it rose so musical,  
Betwixt the hollow pauses of the storm,  
That at the sound the winds forgot to rave,  
And the stern demon of the tempest, charm'd  
Sunk on his rocking throne, to still repose,  
Locked in the arms of silence.<sup>1</sup>

\*            \*            \*            \*

The angelic hosts in their inferior Heaven,  
Hymn to their golden harps His praise sublime,  
Repeating loud, ' The Lord our God is great,'  
In varied harmonies.—The glorious sounds  
Roll o'er the air serene—The Æolian spheres,  
Harping along their viewless boundaries,  
Catch the full note, and cry, ' The Lord is great,'  
Responding to the Seraphim.—O'er all,  
From orb to orb, to the remotest verge  
Of the created world, the sound is borne  
Till the whole universe is full of HIM.<sup>2</sup>

There speaks the authentic voice of poetry ;

<sup>1</sup> From *Lines supposed to be Spoken by a Lover*, not otherwise included in this edition.

<sup>2</sup> *Lines written on a Survey of the Heavens.*

and, in such sonnets as *To December*, *What art thou, mighty One!* and in many of his lyrics, he attains an expression that arrests and charms. His chief weakness lies in passages where he forsakes his natural and customary restfulness, and attempts to be vivid and dramatic. He then flounders in too lavish a use of such words as "wild," "horrid," "affright," "shriek," which can only be effectively handled by the very greatest word artists, and even by them only with the utmost caution and restraint. Gray succeeded, in his poems from the Norse and the Welsh, in making such expressions impart vigour and wildness to his verse, but when White is influenced by him in this matter, he is generally grotesque.

In forming our estimate of White we must always remember that he was only twenty-one when he died, and that even in his best work we only see the preparatory efforts of his muse. At the time of his death his views both of art and of life were undeveloped and vague, but they were living, and it is not too much to say that their growth would have produced poetry of a very high order indeed, though not, I believe, of the highest. Speculations as to what a young poet might have been, had he lived, are, however, unprofitable, and we are chiefly concerned with actual achievement. This test reveals Kirke White as a poet, not of the greatest truly, but a poet, earnest,

vital, and lovable. His position among the singers may not be a very high one, but he claims kinship with them, and that claim cannot justly be disallowed. His work is possessed of a definite value and charm, and a little of it is worthy of a place in any comprehensive English anthology. I venture to maintain that any one who, reading it, dismisses it as worthless, is for the moment lacking in critical perception and in a sense of the fitness of things.

JOHN DRINKWATER

BIRMINGHAM, 1907.



P O E M S

INCLUDED IN THE

‘CLIFTON GROVE’ VOLUME  
OF 1803



POEMS INCLUDED IN THE  
'CLIFTON GROVE' VOLUME  
OF 1803

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TO MY LYRE

AN ODE

I

THOU simple Lyre !—Thy music wild  
Has served to charm the weary hour,  
And many a lonely night has 'guiled,  
When even pain has own'd and smiled,  
Its fascinating power.

II

Yet, oh my Lyre ! the busy crowd  
Will little heed thy simple tones :  
Them mightier minstrels harping loud  
Engross,—and thou and I must shroud  
Where dark oblivion 'thrones.

10

III

No hand, thy diapason o'er,  
Well skill'd, I throw with sweet sublime ;  
For me, no academic lore  
Has taught the solemn strain to pour,  
Or build the polish'd rhyme.

## IV

Yet thou to *Sylvan* themes canst soar ;  
 Thou know'st to charm the *woodland* train :  
 The rustic swains believe thy power  
 Can hush the wild winds when they roar,  
 And still the billowy main. 20

## V

These honours, Lyre, we yet may keep,  
 I, still unknown, may live with thee,  
 And gentle zephyr's wing will sweep  
 Thy solemn string, where low I sleep  
 Beneath the alder tree.

## VI

This little dirge will please me more  
 Than the full requiem's swelling peal ;  
 I'd rather than that crowds should sigh  
 For me, that from some kindred eye  
 The trickling tear should steal. 30

## VII

Yet dear to me the wreath of bay,  
 Perhaps from me debarr'd :  
 And dear to me the classic zone,  
 Which, snatch'd from learning's labour'd throne,  
 Adorns th' accepted bard.

## VIII

And O ! if yet 'twere mine to dwell  
Where Cam or Isis winds along,  
Perchance, inspired with ardour chaste,  
I yet might call the ear of taste  
To listen to my song.

40

## IX

Oh ! then, my little friend, thy style  
I'd change to happier lays,  
Oh ! then, the cloister'd glooms should smile,  
And through the long, the fretted aisle  
Should swell the note of praise.

## CLIFTON GROVE

## A SKETCH IN VERSE

Lo ! in the west, fast fades the lingering light,  
And day's last vestige takes its silent flight.  
No more is heard the woodman's measured stroke  
Which, with the dawn, from yonder dingle broke ;  
No more hoarse clamouring o'er th' uplifted head,  
The crows assembling, seek their wind-rock'd bed ;  
Still'd is the village hum—the woodland sounds  
Have ceased to echo o'er the dewy grounds,  
And general silence reigns, save when below,  
The murmuring Trent is scarcely heard to flow ; 10

And save when, swung by 'nighted rustic late,  
Oft, on its hinge, rebounds the jarring gate ;  
Or when the sheep-bell, in the distant vale,  
Breathes its wild music on the downy gale.

Now, when the rustic wears the social smile,  
Released from day and its attendant toil,  
And draws his household round their evening fire,  
And tells the oft-told tales that never tire ;  
Or where the town's blue turrets dimly rise,  
And manufacture taints the ambient skies, 20  
The pale mechanic leaves the labouring loom,  
The air-pent hold, the pestilential room,  
And rushes out, impatient to begin  
The stated course of customary sin ;  
Now, now my solitary way I bend  
Where solemn groves in awful state impend.  
And cliffs, that boldly rise above the plain,  
Bespeak, bless'd Clifton ! thy sublime domain.  
Here, lonely wandering o'er the sylvan bower,  
I come to pass the meditative hour ; 30  
To bid awhile the strife of passion cease,  
And woo the calms of solitude and peace.  
And oh ! thou sacred Power, who rear'st on high  
Thy leafy throne where waving poplars sigh !  
Genius of woodland shades ! whose mild control  
Steals with resistless witchery to the soul,  
Come with thy wonted ardour, and inspire  
My glowing bosom with thy hallowed fire.  
And thou too, Fancy, from thy starry sphere,  
Where to the hymning orbs thou lend'st thine ear, 40

Do thou descend, and bless my ravish'd sight,  
Veil'd in soft visions of serene delight.  
At thy command the gale that passes by  
Bears in its whispers mystic harmony.  
Thou wav'st thy wand, and lo ! what forms appear !  
On the dark cloud what giant shapes career !  
The ghosts of Ossian skim the misty vale,  
And hosts of Sylphids on the moon-beams sail.

This gloomy alcove, darkling to the sight,  
Where meeting trees create eternal night ; 50  
Save, when from yonder stream, the sunny ray,  
Reflected, gives a dubious gleam of day ;  
Recalls, endearing to my alter'd mind,  
Times, when beneath the boxen hedge reclined,  
I watch'd the lapwing to her clamorous brood ;  
Or lured the robin to its scatter'd food ;  
Or woke with song the woodland echo wild,  
And at each gay response delighted smiled.  
How oft, when childhood threw its golden ray  
Of gay romance o'er every happy day, 60  
Here would I run, a visionary boy,  
When the hoarse tempest shook the vaulted sky,  
And, fancy-led, beheld th' Almighty's form  
Sternly careering on the eddy storm ;  
And heard, while awe congeal'd my inmost soul,  
His voice terrific in the thunders roll.  
With secret joy, I view'd with vivid glare  
The volley'd lightnings cleave the sullen air ;  
And, as the warring winds around reviled,  
With awful pleasure big,—I heard and smiled. 70

Beloved remembrance !—Memory which endears  
This silent spot to my advancing years.  
Here dwells eternal peace, eternal rest,  
In shades like these to live is to be blest.  
While happiness evades the busy crowd,  
In rural coverts loves the maid to shroud.  
And thou too, Inspiration, whose wild flame  
Shoots with electric swiftness through the frame,  
Thou here dost love to sit with up-turn'd eye,  
And listen to the stream that murmurs by, 80  
The woods that wave, the grey owl's silken flight,  
The mellow music of the listening night.  
Congenial calms more welcome to my breast  
Than maddening joy in dazzling lustre drest,  
To Heaven my prayers, my daily prayers, I raise,  
That ye may bless my unambitious days,  
Withdrawn, remote, from all the haunts of strife,  
May trace with me the lowly vale of life,  
And when her banner Death shall o'er me wave,  
May keep your peaceful vigils on my grave. 90  
Now as I rove, where wide the prospect grows,  
A livelier light upon my vision flows.  
No more above th' embracing branches meet,  
No more the river gurgles at my feet,  
But seen deep, down the cliff's impending side,  
Through hanging woods, now gleams its silver tide.  
Dim is my upland path,—across the green  
Fantastic shadows fling, yet oft between  
The chequer'd glooms, the moon her chaste ray sheds,  
Where knots of blue-bells droop their graceful  
heads, 100

And beds of violets blooming 'mid the trees,  
Load with waste fragrance the nocturnal breeze.

Say, why does Man, while to his opening sight  
Each shrub presents a source of chaste delight,  
And Nature bids for him her treasures flow,  
And gives to him alone his bliss to know,  
Why does he pant for vice's deadly charms?  
Why clasp the syren pleasure to his arms?  
And suck deep draughts of her voluptuous breath,  
Though fraught with ruin, infamy, and death? 110  
Could he who thus to vile enjoyment clings,  
Know what calm joy from purer sources springs,  
Could he but feel how sweet, how free from strife,  
The harmless pleasures of a harmless life,  
No more his soul would pant for joys impure,  
The deadly chalice would no more allure,  
But the sweet potion he was wont to sip,  
Would turn to poison on his conscious lip.

Fair Nature ! thee, in all thy varied charms,  
Fain would I clasp for ever in my arms : 120  
Thine are the sweets which never, never sate,  
Thine still remain through all the storms of fate.  
Though not for me, 'twas Heaven's divine command  
To roll in acres of paternal land,  
Yet still my lot is bless'd, while I enjoy  
Thine opening beauties with a lover's eye.

Happy is he, who, though the cup of bliss  
Has ever shunn'd him when he thought to kiss,

Who, still in abject poverty or pain,  
 Can count with pleasurable what small joys remain : 130  
 Though were his sight convey'd from zone to zone,  
 He would not find one spot of ground his own,  
 Yet, as he looks around, he cries with glee,  
 These bounding prospects all were made for me :  
 For me yon waving fields their burden bear,  
 For me yon labourer guides the shining share,  
 While happy I in idle ease recline,  
 And mark the glorious visions as they shine.  
 This is the charm, by sages often told,  
 Converting all its touches into gold. 140  
 Content can soothe, where'er by fortune placed,  
 Can rear a garden in the desert waste.

How lovely, from this hill's superior height,  
 Spreads the wide view before my straining sight !  
 O'er many a varied mile of lengthening ground,  
 E'en to the blue-ridged hill's remotest bound,  
 My ken is borne ; while o'er my head serene,  
 The silver moon illumines the misty scene ;  
 Now shining clear, now darkening in the glade,  
 In all the soft varieties of shade. 150  
 Behind me, lo ! the peaceful hamlet lies,  
 The drowsy god has seal'd the cotter's eyes.  
 No more, where late the social fagot blazed,  
 The vacant peal resounds, by little raised ;  
 But lock'd in silence, o'er Arion's<sup>1</sup> star  
 The slumbering Night rolls on her velvet car :

<sup>1</sup> The Constellation Delphinus. For authority for this appellation, vide Ovid's *Fasti*, xi, 113.

The church-bell tolls, deep-sounding down the glade,  
The solemn hour for walking spectres made ;  
The simple plough-boy, wakening with the sound,  
Listens aghast, and turns him startled round, 160  
Then stops his ears, and strives to close his eyes,  
Lest at the sound some grisly ghost should rise.

Now ceased the long, the monitory toll,  
Returning silence stagnates in the soul ;  
Save when, disturb'd by dreams, with wild affright,  
The deep mouth'd mastiff bays the troubled night,  
Or where the village ale-house crowns the vale,  
The creaking sign-post whistles to the gale.

A little onward let me bend my way,  
Where the moss'd seat invites the traveller's  
stay. 170

That spot, oh ! yet it is the very same ;  
That hawthorn gives its shade, and gave it name ;  
There yet the primrose opes its earliest bloom,  
There yet the violet sheds its first perfume,  
And in the branch that rears above the rest  
The robin unmolested builds its nest.

'Twas here, when Hope, presiding o'er my breast,  
In vivid colours every prospect drest :

'Twas here, reclining, I indulged her dreams,  
And lost the hour in visionary schemes. 180

Here, as I press once more the ancient seat,  
Why, bland deceiver ! not renew the cheat ?  
Say, can a few short years this change achieve,  
That thy illusions can no more deceive !  
Time's sombrous tints have every view o'erspread,  
And thou too, gay Seducer ! art *thou* fled ?

Though vain thy promise, and the suit severe,  
 Yet thou couldst guile Misfortune of her tear,  
 And oft thy smile across life's gloomy way,  
 Could throw a gleam of transitory day. 190

How gay, in youth, the flattering future seems ;  
 How sweet is manhood in the infant's dreams ;  
 The dire mistake too soon is brought to light,  
 And all is buried in redoubled night.

Yet some can rise superior to their pain,  
 And in their breasts the charmer Hope retain :  
 While others, dead to feeling, can survey,  
 Unmoved, their fairest prospects fade away :  
 But yet a few there be,—too soon o'ercast !  
 Who shrink unhappy from the adverse blast, 200  
 And woo the first bright gleam, which breaks the  
 gloom,

To gild the silent slumbers of the tomb.  
 So in these shades the early primrose blows,  
 Too soon deceived by suns and melting snows,  
 So falls untimely on the desert waste ;  
 Its blossoms withering in the northern blast.

Now pass'd whate'er the upland heights display,  
 Down the steep cliff I wind my devious way ;  
 Oft rousing, as the rustling path I beat,  
 The timid hare from its accustom'd seat. 210  
 And oh ! how sweet this walk o'erhung with  
 wood,

That winds the margin of the solemn flood !  
 What rural objects steal upon the sight !  
 What rising views prolong the calm delight ;

The brooklet branching from the silver Trent,  
The whispering birch by every zephyr bent,  
The woody island, and the naked mead,  
The lowly hut half hid in groves of reed,  
The rural wicket, and the rural stile,  
And, frequent interspersed, the woodman's pile. 220  
Above, below, where'er I turn my eyes,  
Rocks, waters, woods, in grand succession rise.  
High up the cliff the varied groves ascend,  
And mournful larches o'er the wave impend.  
Around, what sounds, what magic sounds arise,  
What glimmering scenes salute my ravish'd eyes :  
Soft sleep the waters on their pebbly bed,  
The woods wave gently o'er my drooping head,  
And, swelling slow, comes wafted on the wind,  
Lorn Progne's note from distant copse behind. 230  
Still, every rising sound of calm delight  
Stamps but the fearful silence of the night,  
Save when is heard, between each dreary rest,  
Discordant from her solitary nest,  
The owl, dull-screaming to the wandering moon ;  
Now riding, cloud-wrapp'd, near her highest noon :  
Or when the wild-duck, southering, hither rides,  
And plunges sullen in the sounding tides.

How oft, in this sequestered spot, when youth  
Gave to each tale the holy force of truth, 240  
Have I long linger'd, while the milk-maid sung  
The tragic legend, till the woodland rung !  
That tale, so sad ! which, still to memory dear,  
From its sweet source can call the sacred tear,

And (lulled to rest stern reason's harsh control)  
 Steal its soft magic to the passive soul.  
 These hallow'd shades,—these trees that woo the  
     wind,  
 Recall its faintest features to my mind.

A hundred passing years, with march sublime,  
 Have swept beneath the silent wing of time,      250  
 Since, in yon hamlet's solitary shade,  
 Reclusely dwelt the far-famed Clifton Maid,  
 The beauteous Margaret ; for her each swain  
 Confest in private his peculiar pain,  
 In secret sigh'd, a victim to despair,  
 Nor dared to hope to win the peerless fair.  
 No more the shepherd on the blooming mead  
 Attuned to gaiety his artless reed,  
 No more entwined the pansied wreath, to deck  
 His favourite wether's unpolluted neck,      260  
 But listless, by yon babbling stream reclined,  
 He mixed his sobbings with the passing wind,  
 Bemoan'd his hapless love ; or, boldly bent,  
 Far from these smiling fields, a rover went,  
 O'er distant lands, in search of ease, to roam,  
 A self-will'd exile from his native home.

Yet not to all the maid express'd disdain ;  
 Her Bateman loved, nor loved the youth in vain.  
 Full oft, low whispering o'er these arching boughs,  
 The echoing vault responded to their vows,      270  
 As here deep hidden from the glare of day,  
 Enamour'd oft, they took their secret way.

Yon bosky dingle, still the rustics name ;  
'Twas there the blushing maid confess'd her  
flame.

Down yon green lane they oft were seen to hie,  
When evening slumber'd on the western sky.  
That blasted yew, that mouldering walnut bare,  
Each bears mementoes of the fated pair.

One eve, when Autumn loaded every breeze  
With the fall'n honours of the mourning trees, 280  
The maiden waited at the accustom'd bower,  
And waited long beyond the appointed hour,  
Yet Bateman came not : o'er the woodland drear,  
Howling portentous, did the winds career ;  
And bleak and dismal on the leafless woods,  
The fitful rains rush'd down in sudden floods ;  
The night was dark ; as, now and then, the gale  
Paused for a moment—Margaret listen'd, pale ;  
But through the covert to her anxious ear,  
No rustling footstep spoke her lover near. 290  
Strange fears now fill'd her breast,—she knew not  
why,

She sigh'd, and Bateman's name was in each sigh.  
She hears a noise—'tis he—he comes at last ;—  
Alas ! 'twas but the gale which hurried past ;  
But now she hears a quickening footstep sound,  
Lightly it comes, and nearer does it bound ;  
'Tis Bateman's self—he springs into her arms,  
'Tis he that clasps, and chides her vain alarms.  
' Yet why this silence?—I have waited long,  
And the cold storm has yell'd the trees among, 300

And now thou'rt here my fears are fled—yet speak,  
 Why does the salt tear moisten on thy cheek?  
 Say, what is wrong?'—Now, through a parting  
     cloud

The pale moon peer'd from her tempestuous shroud,  
 And Bateman's face was seen :—'twas deadly white,  
 And sorrow seem'd to sicken in his sight.

' Oh, speak, my love !' again the maid conjured,  
 ' Why is thy heart in sullen woe immured ?'

He raised his head, and thrice essay'd to tell,  
 Thrice from his lips the unfinish'd accents fell ;     310  
 When thus at last reluctantly he broke

His boding silence, and the maid bespoke :

' Grieve not, my love, but ere the morn advance,  
 I on these fields must cast my parting glance ;  
 For three long years, by cruel fate's command,  
 I go to languish in a foreign land.

Oh, Margaret ! omens dire have met my view,  
 Say, when far distant, wilt thou bear me true?  
 Should honours tempt thee, and should riches fee,  
 Wouldst thou forget thine ardent vows to me,     320  
 And, on the silken couch of wealth reclined,  
 Banish thy faithful Bateman from thy mind ?'

' Oh ! why', replies the maid, ' my faith thus prove,  
 Canst thou ! ah, canst thou, then suspect my love?  
 I hear me, just God ! if from my traitorous heart,  
 My Bateman's fond remembrance e'er shall part,  
 If, when he hail again his native shore,  
 He finds his Margaret true to him no more,  
 May fiends of hell, and every power of dread,  
 Conjoin'd, then drag me from my perjured bed,     330

And hurl me headlong down these awful steep,  
To find deserved death in yonder deeps !'<sup>1</sup>  
Thus spake the maid, and from her finger drew  
A golden ring, and broke it quick in two ;  
One half she in her lovely bosom hides,  
The other, trembling, to her love confides.  
' This bind the vow ', she said, ' this mystic charm,  
No future recantation can disarm,  
The rite vindictive does the fates involve,  
No tears can move it, no regrets dissolve.' 340

She ceased. The death-bird gave a dismal cry,  
The river moan'd, the wild gale whistled by,  
And once again the lady of the night  
Behind a heavy cloud withdrew her light.  
Trembling she view'd these portents with dismay :  
But gently Bateman kiss'd her fears away :  
Yet still he felt conceal'd a secret smart,  
Still melancholy bodings fill'd his heart.

When to the distant land the youth was sped,  
A lonely life the moody maiden led. 350  
Still would she trace each dear, each well-known walk,  
Still by the moonlight to her love would talk,  
And fancy, as she paced among the trees,  
She heard his whispers in the dying breeze.  
Thus two years glided on in silent grief ;  
The third, her bosom own'd the kind relief ;

<sup>1</sup> This part of the Trent is commonly called *The Clifton Deep*.

Absence had cooled her love—the impoverish'd flame  
 Was dwindling fast, when lo ! the tempter came ;  
 He offer'd wealth, and all the joys of life,  
 And the weak maid became another's wife ! 360

Six guilty months had marked the false one's crime,  
 When Bateman hail'd once more his native clime,  
 Sure of her constancy, elate he came,  
 The lovely partner of his soul to claim.  
 Light was his heart, as up the well-known way  
 He bent his steps—and all his thoughts were gay.  
 Oh ! who can paint his agonizing throes,  
 When on his ear the fatal news arose !  
 Chill'd with amazement—senseless with the blow,  
 He stood a marble monument of woe ; 370  
 Till call'd to all the horrors of despair,  
 He smote his brow, and tore his horrent hair ;  
 Then rush'd impetuous from the dreadful spot,  
 And sought those scenes, (by memory ne'er forgot,)  
 Those scenes, the witness of their growing flame,  
 And now like witnesses of Margaret's shame.  
 'Twas night—he sought the river's lonely shore,  
 And traced again their former wanderings o'er.  
 Now on the bank in silent grief he stood,  
 And gazed intently on the stealing flood, 380  
 Death in his mien and madness in his eye,  
 He watch'd the waters as they murmur'd by ;  
 Eade the base murderess triumph o'er his grave—  
 Prepared to plunge into the whelming wave.  
 Yet still he stood irresolutely bent,  
 Religion sternly stay'd his rash intent.

He knelt.—Cool play'd upon his cheek the wind,  
And fann'd the fever of his maddening mind.  
The willows waved, the stream it sweetly swept,  
'The paly moonbeam on its surface slept, 390  
And all was peace ;—he felt the general calm  
O'er his rack'd bosom shed a genial balm :  
When casting far behind his streaming eye,  
He saw the Grove—in fancy saw *her* lie,  
*His* Margaret, lull'd in Germain's<sup>1</sup> arms to rest,  
And all the demon rose within his breast.  
Convulsive now, he clench'd his trembling hand,  
Cast his dark eye once more upon the land,  
Then, at one spring he spurn'd the yielding bank,  
And in the calm deceitful current sank. 400

Sad, on the solitude of night, the sound,  
As in the stream he plunged, was heard around :  
Then all was still—the wave was rough no more,  
The river swept as sweetly as before ;  
The willows waved, the moonbeams shone serene,  
And peace returning brooded o'er the scene.

Now, see upon the perjured fair one hang  
Remorse's glooms and never-ceasing pang.  
Full well she knew, repentant now too late,  
She soon must bow beneath the stroke of fate. 410  
But, for the babe she bore beneath her breast,  
The offended God prolong'd her life unblest'd.  
But fast the fleeting moments roll'd away,  
And near, and nearer drew the dreaded day ;

<sup>1</sup> Germain is the traditionary name of her husband.

That day, foredoom'd to give her child the light,  
 And hurl its mother to the shades of night.  
 The hour arrived, and from the wretched wife  
 The guiltless baby struggled into life.—  
 As night drew on, around her bed, a band  
 Of friends and kindred kindly took their stand ; 420  
 In holy prayer they pass'd the creeping time,  
 Intent to expiate her awful crime.  
 Their prayers were fruitless.—As the midnight came,  
 A heavy sleep oppress'd each weary frame.  
 In vain they strove against the o'erwhelming load,  
 Some power unseen their drowsy lids bestrode.  
 They slept, till in the blushing eastern sky  
 The bloomy Morning oped her dewy eye ;  
 Then wakening wide they sought the ravish'd bed,  
 But lo ! the hapless Margaret was fled ; 430  
 And never more the weeping train were doom'd  
 To view the false one, in the deeps intomb'd.

The neighbouring rustics told that in the night  
 They heard such screams as froze them with affright ;  
 And many an infant, at its mother's breast,  
 Started dismay'd, from its unthinking rest.  
 And even now, upon the heath forlorn,  
 They show the path down which the fair was borne,  
 By the fell demons, to the yawning wave,  
 Her own, and murder'd lover's mutual grave. 440

Such is the tale, so sad, to memory dear,  
 Which oft in youth has charm'd my listening  
 ear,

The tale, which bade me find redoubled sweets  
In the drear silence of these dark retreats,  
And even now, with melancholy power,  
Adds a new pleasure to the lonely hour.  
'Mid all the charms by magic Nature given  
To this wild spot, this sublunary heaven,  
With double joy enthusiast Fancy leans  
On the attendant legend of the scenes. 450  
This sheds a fairy lustre on the floods,  
And breathes a mellower gloom upon the woods ;  
This, as the distant cataract swells around,  
Gives a romantic cadence to the sound ;  
This, and the deepening glen, the alley green,  
The silver stream, with sedgy tufts between,  
The massy rock, the wood-encompass'd leas,  
The broom-clad islands, and the nodding trees,  
The lengthening vista, and the present gloom,  
The verdant pathway breathing waste perfume ; 460  
These are thy charms, the joys which these impart  
Bind thee, bless'd Clifton ! close around my heart.

Dear Native Grove ! where'er my devious track,  
To thee will Memory lead the wanderer back.  
Whether in Arno's polished vales I stray,  
Or where 'Oswego's swamps' obstruct the day ;  
Or wander lone, where, wildering and wide,  
The tumbling torrent laves St Gothard's side ;  
Or by old Tejo's classic margent muse,  
Or stand entranced with Pyrenean views ; 470  
Still, still to thee, where'er my footsteps roam,  
My heart shall point, and lead the wanderer home.

When splendour offers, and when Fame incites,  
 I'll pause, and think of all thy dear delights,  
 Reject the boon, and, wearied with the change,  
 Renounce the wish which first induced to range ;  
 Turn to these scenes, these well-known scenes once  
     more,

Trace once again old Trent's romantic shore,  
 And, tired with worlds, and all their busy ways,  
 Here waste the little remnant of my days. 480  
 But, if the Fates should this last wish deny,  
 And doom me on some foreign shore to die :  
 Oh ! should it please the world's supernal King,  
 That weltering waves my funeral dirge shall sing ;  
 Or that my corse should, on some desert strand,  
 Lie stretch'd beneath the Simoöm's blasting hand ;  
 Still, though unwept I find a stranger tomb,  
 My sprite shall wander through this favourite gloom,  
 Ride on the wind that sweeps the leafless grove,  
 Sigh on the wood-blast of the dark alcove, 490  
 Sit, a lorn spectre on yon well-known grave,  
 And mix its moanings with the desert wave.

## GONDOLINE

## A BALLAD

THE night it was still<sup>1</sup>, and the moon it shone  
Serenely on the sea,  
And the waves at the foot of the rifted rock  
They murmur'd pleasantly.

When Gondoline roam'd along the shore,  
A maiden full fair to the sight ;  
Though love had made bleak the rose on her cheek,  
And turn'd it to deadly white.

Her thoughts they were drear, and the silent tear  
It fill'd her faint blue eye, 10  
As oft she heard, in Fancy's ear,  
Her Bertrand's dying sigh.

Her Bertrand was the bravest youth  
Of all our good King's men,  
And he was gone to the Holy Land  
To fight the Saracen.

And many a month had pass'd away,  
And many a rolling year,  
But nothing the maid from Palestine  
Could of her lover hear. 20

<sup>1</sup> The 1803 volume reads 'dark,' this being altered to 'still' in the subsequent Southey editions. For this alteration there was probably the authority of manuscript,—certainly of sense. ED.

Full oft she vainly tried to pierce  
     The Ocean's misty face ;  
 Full oft she thought her lover's bark  
     She on the wave could trace.

And every night she placed a light  
     In the high rock's lonely tower,  
 To guide her lover to the land,  
     Should the murky tempest lower.

But now despair had seized her breast,  
     And sunken in her eye ; 30  
 ' Oh !-tell me but if Bertrand live,  
     And I in peace will die.'

She wander'd o'er the lonely shore,  
     The Curlew scream'd above,  
 She heard the scream with a sickening heart,  
     Much boding of her love.

Yet still she kept her lonely way,  
     And this was all her cry,  
 ' Oh ! tell me but if Bertrand live,  
     And I in peace shall die.' 40

And now she came to a horrible rift,  
     All in the rock's hard side,  
 A bleak and blasted oak o'erspread  
     The cavern yawning wide.

And pendent from its dismal top  
     The deadly nightshade hung ;  
 The hemlock and the aconite  
     Across the mouth were flung.

And all within was dark and drear,  
And all without was calm ; 50  
Yet Gondoline entered, her soul upheld  
By some deep-working charm.

And as she enter'd the cavern wide,  
The moonbeam gleamed pale,  
And she saw a snake on the craggy rock,  
It clung by its slimy tail.

Her foot it slipped, and she stood aghast,  
She trod on a bloated toad ;  
Yet, still upheld by the secret charm,  
She kept upon her road. 60

And now upon her frozen ear  
Mysterious sounds arose ;  
So, on the mountain's piny top,  
The blustering north wind blows.

Then furious peals of laughter loud  
Were heard with thundering sound,  
Till they died away in soft decay,  
Low whispering o'er the ground.

Yet still the maiden onward went,  
The charm yet onward led, 70  
Though each big glaring ball of sight  
Seem'd bursting from her head.

But now a pale blue light she saw,  
It from a distance came,  
She followed, till upon her sight,  
Burst full a flood of flame.

She stood appall'd ; yet still the charm  
 Upheld her sinking soul ;  
 Yet each bent knee the other smote,  
 And each wild eye did roll. 80

And such a sight as she saw there,  
 No mortal saw before,  
 And such a sight as she saw there,  
 No mortal shall see more.

A burning cauldron stood in the midst,  
 The flame was fierce and high,  
 And all the cave so wide and long,  
 Was plainly seen thereby.

And round about the cauldron stout  
 Twelve withered witches stood : 90  
 Their waists were bound with living snakes,  
 ' And their hair was stiff with blood.

Their hands were gory too ; and red  
 And fiercely flamed their eyes :  
 And they were muttering indistinct  
 Their hellish mysteries

And suddenly they join'd their hands,  
 And uttered a joyous cry,  
 And round about the cauldron stout  
 They danced right merrily. 100

And now they stopp'd ; and each prepared  
 To tell what she had done,  
 Since last the Lady of the night  
 Her waning course had run.

Behind a rock stood Gondoline,  
Thick weeds her face did veil,  
And she lean'd fearful forwarder,  
To hear the dreadful tale.

The first arose : She said she'd seen  
Rare sport since the blind cat mew'd, 110  
She'd been to sea in a leaky sieve,  
And a jovial storm had brew'd.

She call'd around the winged winds,  
And rais'd a devilish route ;  
And she laugh'd so loud, the peals were heard  
Full fifteen leagues about.

She said there was a little bark  
Upon the roaring wave,  
And there was a woman there who'd been  
To see her husband's grave. 120

And she had got a child in her arms,  
It was her only child,  
And oft its little infant pranks  
Her heavy heart beguil'd.

And there was too in that same bark,  
A father and his son ;  
The lad was sickly, and the sire  
Was old and woe-begone.

And when the tempest waxed strong,  
And the bark could no more it 'bide, 130  
She said it was jovial fun to hear  
How the poor devils cried.

The mother clasp'd her orphan child

Unto her breast, and wept ;

And sweetly folded in her arms

The careless baby slept.

And she told how, in the shape o' the wind,

As manfully it roar'd,

She twisted her hand in the infant's hair

And threw it overboard.

140

And to have seen the mother's pangs,

'Twas a glorious sight to see ;

The crew could scarcely hold her down

From jumping in the sea.

The hag held a lock of the hair in her hand,

And it was soft and fair :

It must have been a lovely child,

To have had such lovely hair.

And she said, the father in his arms

He held his sickly son,

150

And his dying throes they fast arose,

His pains were nearly done.

And she throttled the youth with her sinewy hands,

And his face grew deadly blue ;

And his father he tore his thin grey hair,

And kiss'd the livid hue.

And then she told, how she bored a hole

In the bark, and it fill'd away :

And 'twas rare to hear, how some did swear,

And some did vow and pray.

160

The man and woman they soon were dead,  
The sailors their strength did urge ;  
But the billows that beat were their windingsheet,  
And the winds sung their funeral dirge.

She threw the infant's hair in the fire,  
The red flame flamed high,  
And round about the cauldron stout  
They danced right merrily.

The second begun : She said she had done  
The task that Queen Hecat' had set her, 170  
And that the devil, the father of evil,  
Had never accomplish'd a better.

She said, there was an aged woman,  
And she had a daughter fair,  
Whose evil habits fill'd her heart  
With misery and care.

The daughter had a paramour,  
A wicked man was he,  
And oft the woman him against  
Did murmur grievously. 180

And the hag had work'd the daughter up  
To murder her old mother,  
That then she might seize on all her goods,  
And wanton with her lover.

And one night as the old woman  
Was sick and ill in bed,  
And pondering sorely on the life  
Her wicked daughter led,

She heard her footstep on the floor,  
    And she raised her pallid head, 190  
And she saw her daughter, with a knife,  
    Approaching to her bed.

And said, my child, I'm very ill  
    I have not long to live,  
Now kiss my cheek, that ere I die  
    Thy sins I may forgive.

And the murderess bent to kiss her cheek,  
    And she lifted the sharp bright knife,  
And the mother saw her fell intent,  
    And hard she begg'd for life. 200

But prayers would nothing her avail,  
    And she screamed loud with fear ;  
But the house was lone, and the piercing screams  
    Could reach no human ear.

And though that she was sick, and old,  
    She struggled hard, and fought ;  
The murderess cut three fingers through  
    Ere she could reach her throat.

And the hag she held the fingers up,  
    The skin was mangled sore ; 210  
And they all agreed a nobler deed  
    Was never done before.

And she threw the fingers in the fire,  
    The red flame flamed high,  
And round about the cauldron stout  
    They danced right merrily.

The third arose : She said she'd been  
    To Holy Palestine ;  
And seen more blood in one short day,  
    Than they had all seen in nine. 220

Now Gondoline, with fearful steps,  
    Drew nearer to the flame,  
For much she dreaded now to hear  
    Her hapless lover's name.

The hag related then the sports  
    Of that eventful day,  
When on the well-contested field  
    Full fifteen thousand lay.

She said, that she in human gore  
    Above the knees did wade, 230  
And that no tongue could truly tell  
    The tricks she there had play'd.

There was a gallant-featured youth,  
    Who like a hero fought ;  
He kiss'd a bracelet on his wrist,  
    And every danger sought.

And in a vassal's garb disguised  
    Unto the knight she sued,  
And tells him she from Britain comes,  
    And brings unwelcome news. 240

That three days ere she had embark'd,  
    His love had given her hand  
Unto a wealthy Thane :—and thought  
    Him dead in holy land.

And to have seen how he did writhe  
When this her tale she told,  
It would have made a wizard's blood  
Within his heart run cold.

Then fierce he spurr'd his warrior steed,  
And sought the battle's bed ; 250  
And soon all mangled o'er with wounds,  
He on the cold turf bled.

And from his smoking corse she tore  
His head, half clove in two :  
She ceased, and from beneath her garb  
The bloody trophy drew.

The eyes were starting from their socks,  
The mouth it ghastly grinn'd,  
And there was a gash across the brow,  
The scalp was nearly skinn'd.

'Twas Bertrand's Head !! With a horrible scream,  
The maiden gave a spring,  
And from her fearful hiding place  
She fell into the ring.

The lights they fled—the cauldron sunk,  
Deep thunders shook the dome,  
And hollow peals of laughter came  
Resounding through the gloom.

Insenſible the maiden lay  
    Upon the helliſh ground,  
And ſtill myſterious ſounds were heard  
    At intervals around.

270

She woke—she half arose—and wild,  
    She cast a horrid glare,  
The sounds had ceased, the lights had fled,  
    And all was stillness there.

And through an awning in the rock,  
    The moon it sweetly shone,  
And show'd a river in the cave  
    Which dismally did moan. 280

The stream was black, it sounded deep  
    As it rush'd the rocks between,  
It offer'd well, for madness fired  
    The breast of Gondoline.

She plunged in, the torrent moan'd  
    With its accustom'd sound,  
And hollow peals of laughter loud  
    Again rebellow'd round.

The maid was seen no more.—But oft  
    Her ghost is known to glide, 290  
At midnight's silent, solemn hour,  
    Along the ocean's side.

## LINES

## WRITTEN ON A SURVEY OF THE HEAVENS

In the Morning before Daybreak

YE many twinkling stars, who yet do hold  
 Your brilliant places in the sable vault  
 Of night's dominions !—Planets, and central orbs  
 Of other systems :—big as the burning sun  
 Which lights this nether globe—yet to our eye  
 Small as the glow-worm's lamp !—To you I raise  
 My lowly orisons, while, all bewilder'd,  
 My vision strays o'er your ethereal hosts,  
 Too vast, too boundless for our narrow mind,  
 Warp'd with low prejudices, to unfold, 10  
 And sagely comprehend. Thence higher soaring,  
 Through ye, I raise my solemn thoughts to Him,  
 The mighty Founder of this wondrous maze,  
 The great Creator ! Him ! who now sublime,  
 Wrapt in the solitary amplitude  
 Of boundless space, above the rolling spheres  
 Sits on his silent throne, and meditates.

The angelic hosts, in their inferior heaven,  
 Hymn to the golden harps His praise sublime,  
 Repeating loud, ' The Lord our God is great ', 20  
 In varied harmonies.—The glorious sounds  
 Roll o'er the air serene—The Æolian spheres,

Harping along their viewless boundaries,  
Catch the full note, and cry 'The Lord is great',  
Responding to the Seraphim.—O'er all,  
From orb to orb, to the remotest verge  
Of the created world, the sound is borne,  
Till the whole universe is full of HIM.

Oh ! 'tis this heavenly harmony which now  
In fancy strikes upon my listening ear, 30  
And thrills my inmost soul. It bids me smile  
On the vain world, and all its bustling cares,  
And gives a shadowy glimpse of future bliss.  
Oh ! what is man, when at ambition's height,  
What even are kings, when balanced in the scale  
Of these stupendous worlds ! Almighty God !  
Thou, the dread author of these wondrous works !  
Say, canst Thou cast on me, poor passing worm,  
One look of kind benevolence?—Thou canst ;  
For Thou art full of universal love, 40  
And in Thy boundless goodness wilt impart  
Thy beams as well to me as to the proud,  
The pageant insects of a glittering hour.

Oh ! when reflecting on these truths sublime,  
How insignificant do all the joys,  
The gauds, and honours of the world appear !  
How vain ambition ! Why has my wakeful lamp  
Outwatch'd the slow-paced night ? — Why on the  
page,  
The schoolman's labour'd page, have I employ'd  
The hours devoted by the world to rest, 50

And needful to recruit exhausted nature?  
 Say, can the voice of narrow Fame repay  
 The loss of health? or can the hope of glory  
 Lend a new throb unto my languid heart,  
 Cool, even now, my feverish aching brow,  
 Relume the fires of this deep-sunken eye,  
 Or paint new colours on this pallid cheek?

Say, foolish one—can that unbodied fame,  
 For which thou barterest health and happiness,  
 Say, can it soothe the slumbers of the grave? 60  
 Give a new zest to bliss, or chase the pangs  
 Of everlasting punishment condign?  
 Alas! how vain are mortal man's desires!  
 How fruitless his pursuits! Eternal God!  
 Guide Thou my footsteps in the way of truth,  
 And oh! assist me so to live on earth,  
 That I may die in peace, and claim a place  
 In Thy high dwelling.—All but this is folly,  
 The vain illusions of deceitful life.

## TO THE HERB ROSEMARY<sup>1</sup>

### I

SWEET scented flower! who art wont to bloom  
 On January's front severe,  
 And o'er the wintry desert drear  
 To waft thy waste perfume!

<sup>1</sup> The rosemary buds in January. It is the flower commonly put in the coffins of the dead.

Come, thou shalt form my nosegay now,  
And I will bind thee round my brow,  
And as I twine the mournful wreath,  
I'll weave a melancholy song :  
And sweet the strain shall be and long,  
The melody of death.

10

## II

Come, funeral flow'r ! who lov'st to dwell  
With the pale corse in lonely tomb,  
And throw across the desert gloom  
A sweet decaying smell.  
Come, press my lips, and lie with me  
Beneath the lowly Alder tree,  
And we will sleep a pleasant sleep,  
And not a care shall dare intrude,  
To break the marble solitude,  
So peaceful, and so deep.

20

## III

And hark ! the wind-god, as he flies,  
Moans hollow in the forest trees,  
And sailing on the gusty breeze,  
Mysterious music dies.  
Sweet flower ! that requiem wild is mine,  
It warns me to the lonely shrine,  
The cold turf altar of the dead ;  
My grave shall be in yon lone spot,  
Where as I lie, by all forgot,  
A dying fragrance thou wilt o'er my ashes shed.

30

## TO THE MORNING

BEAMS of the day-break faint ! I hail  
 Your dubious hues, as on the robe  
 Of night, which wraps the slumbering globe  
 I mark your traces pale.  
 Tir'd with the taper's sickly light,  
 And with the wearying, number'd night,  
 I hail the streaks of morn divine :  
 And lo ! they break between the dewy wreathes  
 That round my rural casement twine :  
 The fresh gale o'er the green lawn breathes ;                    10  
 It fans my feverish brow,—it calms the mental  
 strife,  
 And cheerily re-illumes the lambent flame of life.

The lark has her gay song begun,  
 She leaves her grassy nest,  
 And soars till the *unrisen sun*  
 Gleams on her speckled breast.  
 Now let me leave my restless bed,  
 And o'er the spangled uplands tread ;  
 Now through the custom'd wood-walk wend ;  
 By many a green lane lies my way,                    20  
 Where high o'er head the wild briers bend,  
 Till on the mountain's summit grey,  
 I sit me down and mark the glorious dawn of day.

Oh, Heaven ! the soft refreshing gale  
It breathes into my breast,  
My sunk eye gleams, my cheek so pale  
Is with new colours drest.  
Blythe Health ! thou soul of life and ease !  
Come thou too, on the balmy breeze,

Invigorate my frame :

30

I'll join, with thee, the buskin'd chase,  
With thee the distant clime will trace,  
Beyond those clouds of flame.

Above, below, what charms unfold

In all the varied view,

Before me all is burnish'd gold,

Behind the twilight's hue.

The mists which on old night await,

Far to the West they hold their state,

They shun the clear blue face of morn ;

40

Along the fine cerulean sky

And fleecy clouds successive fly,

While bright prismatic beams their shadowy folds  
adorn.

And hark ! the thatcher has begun

His whistle on the eaves,

And oft the hedger's bill is heard

Among the rustling leaves.

The slow team creaks upon the road,

The noisy whip resounds,

The driver's voice, his carol blythe,

50

The mower's stroke, his whetting scythe,

Mix with the morning's sounds.

Who would not rather take his seat  
     Beneath these clumps of trees,  
 The early dawn of day to greet,  
     And catch the healthy breeze,  
 Than on the silken couch of sloth  
     Luxurious to lie ;  
 Who would not from life's dreary waste  
 Snatch, when he could, with eager haste, 60  
     An interval of joy !

To him who simply thus recounts  
     The morning's pleasures o'er,  
 Fate dooms, ere long, the scene must close  
     To ope on him no more.  
 Yet, morning ! unrepining still  
     He'll greet thy beams awhile,  
 And surely thou, when o'er his grave  
 Solemn the whispering willows wave,  
     Wilt sweetly on him smile. 70  
 And the pale glow-worm's pensive light  
 Will guide his ghostly walks in the drear moonless  
     night.

## MY STUDY

### A LETTER IN HUDIBRASTIC VERSE

YOU bid me, Ned, describe the place  
 Where I, one of the rhyming race,  
 Pursue my studies *con amore*,  
 And wanton with the muse in glory.

Well, figure to your senses straight,  
Upon the house's topmost height,  
A closet, just six feet by four,  
With white-wash'd walls and plaster floor,  
So noble large, 'tis scarcely able  
To admit a single chair and table : 10  
And (lest the muse should die with cold)  
A smoky grate my fire to hold :  
So wondrous small, 'twould much it pose  
To melt the ice-drop on one's nose ;  
And yet so big, it covers o'er  
Full half the spacious room and more.

A window vainly stuff'd about,  
To keep November's breezes out,  
So crazy, that the panes proclaim,  
That soon they mean to leave the frame. 20

My furniture I sure may crack—  
A broken chair without a back ;  
A table wanting just two legs,  
One end sustain'd by wooden pegs ;  
A desk—of that I am not fervent,  
The work of, Sir, your humble servant,  
(Who, though I say't, am no such fumbler ;)   
A glass decanter and a tumbler,  
From which, my night-parch'd throat I lave,  
Luxurious, with the limpid wave. 30  
A chest of drawers, in antique sections,  
And saw'd by me in all directions ;  
So small, Sir, that whoever views 'em  
Swears nothing but a doll could use 'em.

To these, if you will add a store  
 Of oddities upon the floor,  
 A pair of globes, electric balls,  
 Scales, quadrants, prisms, and cobbler's awls,  
 And crowds of books, on rotten shelves,  
 Octavos, folios, quartos, twelves : 40  
 I think, dear Ned, you curious dog,  
 You'll have my earthly catalogue.  
 But stay,—I nearly had left out  
 My bellows destitute of snout ;  
 And on the walls,—Good Heavens ! why there  
 I've such a load of precious ware,  
 Of heads, and coins, and silver medals,  
 And organ works, and broken pedals ;  
 (For I was once a-building music,  
 Though soon of that employ I grew sick ;) 50  
 And skeletons of laws which shoot  
 All out of one primordial root ;  
 That you, at such a sight, would swear  
 Confusion's self had settled there.  
 There stands, just by a broken sphere,  
 A Cicero without an ear,  
 A neck, on which, by logic good,  
 I know for sure a head *once* stood ;  
 But who it was the able master  
 Had moulded in the mimic plaster, 60  
 Whether 'twas Pope, or Coke, or Burn,  
 I never yet could justly learn :  
 But knowing well, that any head  
 Is made to answer for the dead

(And sculptors first their faces frame,  
And after pitch upon a name,  
Nor think it aught of a misnomer  
To christen Chaucer's busto Homer,  
Because they both have beards, which, you know,  
Will mark them well from Joan, and Juno), 70  
For some great man, I could not tell  
But NECK might answer just as well,  
So perch'd it up, all in a row  
With Chatham and with Cicero.

Then all around in just degree,  
A range of portraits you may see,  
Of mighty men, and eke of women  
Who are no whit inferior *to* men.

With these fair dames, and heroes round,  
I call my garret classic ground. 80  
For though confined, 'twill well contain  
The ideal flights of Madam Brain.  
No dungeon's walls, no cell confined,  
Can cramp the energies of mind !  
Thus, though my heart may seem so small,  
I've friends, and 'twill contain them all ;  
And should it e'er become so cold  
That these it will no longer hold,  
No more may Heaven her blessings give,  
I shall not then be fit to live. 90

## TO AN EARLY PRIMROSE

MILD offspring of a dark and sullen sire !  
Whose modest form, so delicately fine,  
    Was nursed in whirling storms,  
    And cradled in the winds.

Thee, when young spring first question'd winter's  
    sway,  
And dared the sturdy blusterer to the fight,  
    Thee on this bank he threw  
    To mark his victory.

In this low vale, the promise of the year,  
Serene, thou openest to the nipping gale,                   10  
    Unnoticed and alone,  
    Thy tender elegance.

So virtue blooms, brought forth amid the storms  
Of chill adversity, in some lone walk  
    Of life she rears her head,  
    Obscure and unobserved ;

While every bleaching breeze that on her blows  
Chastens her spotless purity of breast,  
    And hardens her to bear  
    Serene the ills of life.   20

## SONNETS

## I

GIVE me a cottage on some Cambrian wild,  
Where, far from cities, I may spend my days,  
And, by the beauties of the scene beguiled,  
May pity man's pursuits, and shun his ways.  
While on the rock I mark the browsing goat,  
List to the mountain-torrent's distant noise,  
Or the hoarse bittern's solitary note,  
I shall not want the world's delusive joys ;  
But with my little scrip, my book, my lyre,  
Shall think my lot complete, nor covet more ;      10  
And when, with time, shall wane the vital fire,  
I'll raise my pillow on the desert shore,  
And lay me down to rest where the wild wave  
Shall make sweet music o'er my lonely grave.

## II

## THE WINTER TRAVELLER

GOD help thee, Traveller, on thy journey far ;  
The wind is bitter keen,—the snow o'erlays  
The hidden pits, and dangerous hollow ways,  
And darkness will involve thee.—No kind star

To-night will guide thee, Traveller,—and the war  
 Of winds and elements on thy head will break,  
 And in thy agonizing ear the shriek  
 Of spirits howling on their stormy car,  
 Will often ring appalling—I portend  
 A dismal night—and on my wakeful bed 10  
 Thoughts, Traveller, of thee will fill my head,  
 And him who rides where winds and waves contend,  
 And strives, rude cradled on the seas, to guide  
 His lonely bark through the tempestuous tide.

## III

On hearing the Sounds of an Æolian Harp

So ravishingly soft upon the tide  
 Of the infuriate gust, it did career,  
 It might have sooth'd its rugged charioteer,  
 And sunk him to a zephyr ;—then it died,  
 Melting in melody ;—and I descried,  
 Borne to some wizard stream, the form appear  
 Of druid sage, who on the far-off ear  
 Pour'd his lone song, to which the surge replied :  
 Or thought I heard the hapless pilgrim's knell,  
 Lost in some wild enchanted forest's bounds, 10  
 By unseen beings sung ; or are these sounds  
 Such, as 'tis said, at night are known to swell  
 By startled shepherd on the lonely heath,  
 Keeping his night-watch sad, portending death ?

## IV

WHAT art thou, MIGHTY ONE ! and where thy seat ?  
Thou broodest on the calm that cheers the lands,  
And thou dost bear within thine awful hands  
The rolling thunders and the lightnings fleet,  
Stern on thy dark-wrought car of cloud and wind,  
Thou guid'st the northern storm at night's dead  
noon,  
Or on the red wing of the fierce Monsoon,  
Disturb'st the sleeping giant of the Ind.  
In the drear silence of the polar span  
Dost thou repose ? or in the solitude 10  
Of sultry tracts, where the lone caravan  
Hears nightly howl the tiger's hungry brood ?  
Vain thought ! the confines of his throne to trace,  
Who glows through all the fields of boundless space.

## A BALLAD

BE hush'd, be hush'd, ye bitter winds,  
Ye pelting rains a little rest :  
Lie still, lie still, ye busy thoughts,  
That wring with grief my aching breast.

Oh ! cruel was my faithless love,  
To triumph o'er an artless maid ;  
Oh ! cruel was my faithless love,  
To leave the breast by him betray'd.

When exiled from my native home,  
    He should have wiped the bitter tear ;      10  
Nor left me faint and lone to roam,  
    A heart-sick weary wanderer here.

My child moans sadly in my arms,  
    The winds they will not let it sleep :  
Ah, little knows the hapless babe  
    What makes its wretched mother weep !

Now lie thee still, my infant dear,  
    I cannot bear thy sobs to see,  
Harsh is thy father, little one,  
    And never will he shelter thee.      20

Oh, that I were but in my grave,  
    And winds were piping o'er me loud,  
And thou, my poor, my orphan babe,  
    Were nestling in thy mother's shroud !

POEMS WRITTEN BEFORE THE  
PUBLICATION OF 'CLIFTON  
GROVE'

---

SONG FROM FRAGMENT

OF AN

ECCENTRIC DRAMA

THE DANCE OF THE CONSUMPTIVES

I

DING-DONG ! ding-dong !  
Merry, merry, go the bells,  
Ding-dong ! ding-dong !  
Over the heath, over the moor, and over the dale,  
'Swinging slow with sullen roar,'  
Dance, dance away the jocund roundelay !  
Ding-dong, ding-dong, calls us away.

II

Round the oak, and round the elm,  
Merrily foot it o'er the ground !  
The sentry ghost it stands aloof,  
So merrily, merrily foot it round.

10

Ding-dong ! ding-dong !  
Merry, merry go the bells  
Swelling in the nightly gale,  
The sentry ghost,  
It keeps its post,  
And soon, and soon our sports must fail :  
But let us trip the nightly ground,  
While the merry, merry bells ring round.

## III

Hark ! hark ! the death-watch ticks ! 20  
 See, see, the winding-sheet !  
 Our dance is done,  
 Our race is run,  
 And we must lie at the alder's feet !  
 Ding-dong, ding-dong,  
 Merry, merry go the bells,  
 Swinging o'er the weltering wave !  
 And we must seek  
 Our death-beds bleak,  
 Where the green sod grows upon the grave. 30

[They vanish—The Goddess of Consumption descends,  
habited in a sky-blue Robe, attended by mournful  
Music]

Come, Melancholy, sister mine.  
Cold the dews, and chill the night !  
Come from thy dreary shrine !  
The wan moon climbs the heavenly height,  
And underneath the sickly ray,  
Troops of squalid spectres play,

And the dying mortals' groan  
Startles the night on her dusky throne.  
Come, come, sister mine !  
Gliding on the pale moon-shine : 40  
    We'll ride at ease,  
    On the tainted breeze,  
And oh ! our sport will be divine.

[The Goddess of Melancholy advances out of a deep  
Glen in the rear, habited in Black, and covered with a  
thick Veil.—She speaks]

Sister from my dark abode,  
Where nests the raven, sits the toad,  
Hither I come, at thy command :  
Sister, sister, join thy hand !  
Sister, sister, join thy hand !  
I will smooth the way for thee,  
Thou shalt furnish food for me. 50  
Come, let us speed our way  
Where the troops of spectres play ;  
To charnel-houses, church-yards drear,  
Where Death sits with a horrible leer,  
A lasting grin, on a throne of bones,  
And skim along the blue tomb-stones.  
Come, let us speed away,  
Lay our snares, and spread our tether !  
I will smooth the way for thee,  
Thou shalt furnish food for me ; 60  
    And the grass shall wave  
    O'er many a grave,  
Where youth and beauty sleep together.

## CONSUMPTION

Come, let us speed our way !  
 Join our hands and spread our tether !  
 I will furnish food for thee,  
 Thou shalt smoothe the way for me ;  
 And the grass shall wave  
 O'er many a grave,  
 Where youth and beauty sleep together. 70

## MELANCHOLY

Hist, sister, hist ! who comes here ?  
 Oh ! I know her by that tear,  
 By that blue eye's languid glare,  
 By her skin, and by her hair :  
     She is mine,  
     And she is thine,  
 Now the deadliest draught prepare.

## CONSUMPTION

In the dismal night air drest,  
 I will creep into her breast :  
 Flush her cheek, and bleach her skin, 80  
 And feed on the vital fire within.  
 Lover, do not trust her eyes,—  
 When they sparkle most, she dies !  
 Mother, do not trust her breath,—  
 Comfort she will breathe in death !  
 Father, do not strive to save her,—  
 She is mine, and I must have her !  
 The coffin must be her bridal bed ;  
 The winding-sheet must wrap her head ;

The whispering winds must o'er her sigh, 90  
For soon in the grave the maid must lie,  
    The worm it will riot  
    On heavenly diet,  
When death has deflower'd her eye.  
                                  [ *They vanish.*

## LINES

## ON READING THE POEMS OF WARTON

OH, Warton ! to thy soothing shell,  
Stretch'd remote in hermite cell  
Where the brook runs babbling by,  
For ever I could listening lie ;  
And, catching all the Muse's fire,  
Hold converse with the tuneful quire.  
  
What pleasing themes thy page adorn,  
The ruddy streaks of cheerful morn,  
The pastoral pipe, the ode sublime,  
And Melancholy's mournful chime ! 10  
Each with unwonted graces shines  
In thy ever lovely lines.  
  
Thy Muse deserves the lasting meed ;  
Attuning sweet the Dorian reed,  
Now the love-lorn swain complains,  
And sings his sorrows to the plains ;  
Now the Sylvan scenes appear  
Through all the changes of the year ;

Or the elegiac strain  
Softly sings of mental pain, 20  
And mournful diapasons sail  
On the faintly-dying gale.

But, ah ! the soothing scene is o'er !  
On middle flight we cease to soar,  
For now the Muse assumes a bolder sweep,  
Strikes on the lyric string her sorrows deep,  
In strains unheard before.  
Now, now the rising fire thrills high,  
Now, now to heaven's high realms we fly,  
And every throne explore ; 30  
The soul entranced, on mighty wings,  
With all the poet's heat up springs,  
And loses earthly woes ;  
Till all alarm'd at the giddy height,  
The Muse descends on gentler flight,  
And lulls the wearied soul to soft repose.

## CANZONET

### I

MAIDEN ! wrap thy mantle round thee,  
Cold the rain beats on thy breast :  
Why should Horror's voice astound thee ?  
Death can bid the wretched rest !  
All under the tree  
Thy bed may be,  
And thou mayst slumber peacefully.

## II

Maiden ! once gay Pleasure knew thee ;  
Now thy cheeks are pale and deep :  
Love has been a felon to thee, 10  
Yet, poor maiden, do not weep :  
There's rest for thee  
All under the tree,  
Where thou wilt sleep most peacefully.

## THE EVE OF DEATH

## IRREGULAR

## I

SILENCE of death—portentous calm,  
Those airy forms that yonder fly,  
Denote that your void fore-runs a storm,  
That the hour of fate is nigh.  
I see, I see, on the dim mist borne,  
The Spirit of battles rear his crest !  
I see, I see, that ere the morn,  
His spear will forsake its hated rest,  
And the widow'd wife of Larrendill will beat her  
naked breast.

## II

O'er the smooth bosom or the sullen deep 10  
No softly ruffling zephyrs fly  
But Nature sleeps a deathless sleep,  
For the hour of battle is nigh.

Not a loose leaf waves on the dusky oak,  
 But a creeping stillness reigns around ;  
 Except when the raven, with ominous croak,  
 On the ear does unwelcomely sound.  
 I know, I know what this silence means ;  
 I know what the raven saith—  
 Strike, oh, ye bards ! the melancholy harp                    20  
 For this is the eve of death.

## III

Behold, how along the twilight air  
 The shades of our fathers glide !  
 There Morven fled, with the blood-drench'd hair,  
 And Colma with grey side.  
 No gale around its coolness flings,  
 Yet sadly sigh the gloomy trees ;  
 And, hark ! how the harp's unvisited strings  
 Sound sweet, as if swept by a whispering breeze !  
 'Tis done ! the sun he has set in blood !                    30  
 He will never set more to the brave ;  
 Let us pour to the hero the dirge of death—  
 For to-morrow he hies to the grave.

## SONG

## I

SOFTLY, softly blow, ye breezes,  
Gently o'er my Edwy fly !  
Lo ! he slumbers, slumbers sweetly ;  
Softly, zephyrs, pass him by !  
My love is asleep,  
He lies by the deep,  
All along where the salt waves sigh.

## II

I have covered him with rushes,  
Water-flags, and branches dry.  
Edwy, long have been thy slumbers ;                    10  
Edwy, Edwy, ope thine eye !  
My love is asleep,  
He lies by the deep,  
All along where the salt waves sigh.

## III

Still he sleeps ; he will not waken,  
Fastly closed is his eye ;  
Paler is his cheek, and chiller  
Than the icy moon on high.  
Alas ! he is dead,  
He has chose his death-bed                    20  
All along where the salt waves sigh.

## IV

Is it, is it so, my Edwy?  
 Will thy slumbers never fly?  
 Couldst thou think I would survive thee?  
 No, my love, thou bid'st me die.  
     Thou bid'st me seek  
     Thy death-bed bleak  
 All along where the salt waves sigh.

## V

I will gently kiss thy cold lips,  
     On thy breast I'll lay my head, 30  
 And the winds shall sing our death-dirge,  
     And our shroud the waters spread;  
     The moon will smile sweet,  
     And the wild wave will beat,  
 Oh ! so softly o'er our lonely bed.

## SONNET

SWEET to the gay of heart is Summer's smile,  
 Sweet the wild music of the laughing Spring;  
 But ah ! my soul far other scenes beguile,  
     Where gloomy storms their sullen shadows fling.  
 Is it for me to strike the Idalian string—  
     Raise the soft music of the warbling wire,  
 While in my ears the howls of furies<sup>1</sup> ring,  
 And melancholy wastes the vital fire?

<sup>1</sup> The early editions print 'fairies.' Ed.

Away with thoughts like these. To some lone cave  
Where howls the shrill blast, and where sweeps the  
wave, 10  
Direct my steps ; there, in the lonely drear,  
I'll sit remote from worldly noise, and muse  
Till through my soul shall Peace her balm infuse,  
And whisper sounds of comfort in mine ear.

## SONG

SWEET Jessy ! I would fain caress  
That lovely cheek divine ;  
Sweet Jessy, I'd give worlds to press  
That rising breast to mine.

Sweet Jessy, I with passion burn  
Thy soft blue eyes to see ;  
Sweet Jessy, I would die to turn  
Those melting eyes on me !

Yet Jessy, lovely as . . .  
Thy form and face appear, 10  
I'd perish ere I would consent  
To buy them with a tear.

## SONG

OH, that I were the fragrant flower that kisses  
 My Arabella's breast that heaves on high ;  
 Pleased should I be to taste the transient blisses,  
 And on the melting throne to faint, and die.

Oh, that I were the robe that loosely covers  
 Her taper limbs, and Grecian form divine ;  
 Or the entwisted zones, like meeting lovers,  
 That clasp her waist in many an aëry twine.

Oh, that my soul might take its lasting station  
 In her waved hair, her perfumed breath to sip ; 10  
 Or catch, by chance, her blue eyes' fascination !  
 Or meet, by stealth, her soft vermilion lip.

But, chain'd to this dull being, I must ever  
 Lament the doom by which I'm hither placed ;  
 Must pant for moments I must meet with never ;  
 And dream of beauties I must never taste.

POEMS WRITTEN DURING OR  
AFTER THE PUBLICATION  
OF 'CLIFTON GROVE'

---

ODE TO DISAPPOINTMENT

I

COME, Disappointment, come !  
Not in thy terrors clad ;  
Come in thy meekest, saddest guise ;  
Thy chastening rod but terrifies  
The restless and the bad.

But I recline  
Beneath thy shrine,  
And round my brow resigned, thy peaceful cypress  
twine.

II

Though Fancy flies away  
Before thy hollow tread, 10  
Yet meditation, in her cell,  
Hears with faint eye, the lingering knell,  
That tells her hopes are dead ;  
And though the tear  
By chance appear,

Yet she can smile, and say, My all was not laid here.

## III

Come, Disappointment, come !  
 Though from Hope's summit hurl'd,  
 Still, rigid Nurse, thou art forgiven,  
 For thou severe were sent from heaven 20  
 To wean me from the world ;  
 To turn my eye  
 From vanity,  
 And point to scenes of bliss that never, never die.

## IV

What is this passing scene ?  
 A peevish April day !  
 A little sun—a little rain,  
 And then night sweeps along the plain,  
 And all things fade away.  
 Man (soon discuss'd) 30  
 Yields up his trust,  
 And all his hopes and fears lie with him in the dust.

## V

Oh, what is Beauty's power ?  
 It flourishes and dies ;  
 Will the cold earth its silence break,  
 To tell how soft how smooth a cheek  
 Beneath its surface lies ?  
 Mute, mute is all  
 O'er Beauty's fall ;  
 Her praise resounds no more when mantled in her  
 pall. 40

## VI

The most beloved on earth  
Not long survives to-day ;  
So music past is obsolete,  
And yet 'twas sweet, 'twas passing sweet,  
But now 'tis gone away.  
Thus does the shade  
In memory fade,  
When in forsaken tomb the form beloved is laid.

## VII

Then since this world is vain,  
And volatile and fleet, 50  
Why should I lay up earthly joys,  
Where rust corrupts, and moth destroys,  
And cares and sorrows eat ?  
Why fly from ill  
With anxious skill,  
When soon this hand will freeze, this throbbing heart  
be still.

## VIII

Come, Disappointment, come !  
Thou art not stern to me ;  
Sad Monitress ! I own thy sway,  
A votary sad in early day, 60  
I bend my knee to thee.  
From sun to sun  
My race will run,  
I only bow, and say, My God, Thy will be done !

## ODE

ADDRESSED TO H. FUSELI, ESQ. R.A.

On seeing Engravings from his Designs

MIGHTY magician ! who on Torneo's brow,  
 When sullen tempests wrap the throne of night,  
 Art wont to sit and catch the gleam of light,  
 That shoots athwart the gloom opaque below ;  
 And listen to the distant death-shriek long  
 From lonely mariner foundering in the deep,  
 Which rises slowly up the rocky steep,  
 While the weird sisters weave the horrid song :  
 Or when along the liquid sky  
 Serenely chaunt the orbs on high, 10  
 Dost love to sit in musing trance,  
 And mark the northern meteor's dance,  
 (While far below the fitful oar  
 Flings its faint pauses on the steepy shore,)  
 And list the music of the breeze,  
 That sweeps by fits the bending seas ;  
 And often bears with sudden swell  
 The shipwreck'd sailor's funeral knell,  
 By the spirits sung, who keep  
 Their night-watch on the treacherous deep, 20  
 And guide the wakeful helms-man's eye  
 To Helicé in northern sky :

And there upon the rock inclined  
 With mighty visions fill'st the mind,  
 Such as bound in magic spell  
 Him<sup>1</sup> who grasp'd the gates of Hell,  
 And bursting Pluto's dark domain,  
 Held to the day the terrors of his reign.

Genius of Horror and romantic awe,  
 Whose eye explores the secrets of the deep, 30  
 Whose power can bid the rebel fluids creep,  
 Can force the inmost soul to own its law ;  
 Who shall now, sublimest spirit,  
 Who shall now thy wand inherit,  
 From him<sup>2</sup> thy darling child who best  
 Thy shuddering images exprest ?  
 Sullen of soul, and stern and proud,  
 His gloomy spirit spurn'd the crowd,  
 And now he lays his aching head  
 In the dark mansion of the silent dead. 40

Mighty magician ! long thy wand has lain  
 Buried beneath the unfathomable deep ;  
 And oh ! forever must its efforts sleep,  
 May none the mystic sceptre e'er regain ?  
 Oh yes, 'tis his !—Thy other son ;  
 He throws thy dark-wrought tunic on,  
 Fuesslin waves thy wand,—again they rise,  
 Again thy wildering forms salute our ravish'd  
 eyes,

<sup>1</sup> Dante.<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

Him didst thou cradle on the dizzy steep  
 Where round his head the volley'd lightnings  
     flung, 50  
 And the loud winds that round his pillow rung,  
 Wooed the stern infant to the arms of sleep.  
 Or on the highest top of Teneriffe  
 Seated the fearless boy, and bade him look  
 Where far below the weather-beaten skiff  
 On the gulf bottom of the ocean strook.  
 Thou mark'dst him drink with ruthless ear  
 The death-sob, and, disdaining rest,  
 Thou saw'st how danger fired his breast,  
 And in his young hand couch'd the visionary spear. 60  
 Then, Superstition, at thy call,  
 She bore the boy to Odin's Hall,  
 And set before his awe-struck sight  
 The savage feast and spectred fight;  
 And summon'd from his mountain tomb  
 The ghastly warrior son of gloom,  
 His fabled Runic rhymes to sing,  
 While fierce Hresvelger flapp'd his wing;  
 Thou show'dst the trains the shepherd sees,  
 Laid on the stormy Hebrides, 70  
 Which on the mists of evening gleam,  
 Or crowd the foaming desert stream;  
 Lastly her storied hand she waves,  
 And lays him in Florentian caves;  
 There milder fables, lovelier themes,  
 Enwrap his soul in heavenly dreams,  
 There Pity's lute arrests his ear,  
 And draws the half-reluctant tear;

And now at noon of night he roves  
Along the embowering moonlight groves,      80  
And as from many a cavern'd dell  
The hollow wind is heard to swell,  
He thinks some troubled spirit sighs ;  
And as upon the turf he lies  
Where sleeps the silent beam of night,  
He sees below the gliding sprite,  
And hears in Fancy's organs sound  
Aërial music warbling round.

Taste lastly comes and smooths the whole,  
And breathes her polish o'er his soul ;      90  
Glowing with wild, yet chasten'd heat,  
The wonderous work is now complete.

The Poet dreams :—The shadow flies,  
And fainting fast its image dies.  
But lo ! the Painter's magic force  
Arrests the phantom's fleeting course ;  
It lives—it lives—the canvass glows,  
And tenfold vigour o'er it flows.  
The Bard beholds the work achieved,  
And as he sees the shadow rise,      100  
Sublime before his wondering eyes,  
Starts at the image his own mind conceived.

DESCRIPTION OF A SUMMER'S  
EVE

DOWN the sultry arc of day  
 The burning wheels have urged their way,  
 And eve along the western skies  
 Spreads her intermingling dyes.  
 Down the deep, the miry lane,  
 Creeking comes the empty wain,  
 And driver on the shaft-horse sits,  
 Whistling now and then by fits ;  
 And oft with his accustom'd call,  
 Urging on the sluggish Ball. 10  
 The barn is still, the master's gone,  
 And thresher puts his jacket on,  
 While Dick, upon the ladder tall,  
 Nails the dead kite to the wall.  
 Here comes shepherd Jack at last,  
 He has penn'd the sheep-cote fast,  
 For 'twas but two nights before,  
 A lamb was eaten on the moor :  
 His empty wallet *Rover* carries,  
 Now for Jack, when near home, tarries. 20  
 With lolling tongue he runs to try,  
 If the horse-trough be not dry.  
 The milk is settled in the pans,  
 And supper messes in the cans ;  
 In the hovel carts are wheeled,  
 And both the colts are drove a-field ;

The horses are all bedded up,  
And the ewe is with the tup,  
The snare for Mister Fox is set,  
The leaven laid, the thatching wet, 30  
And Bess has slink'd away to talk  
With Roger in the holly-walk.

Now, on the settle all, but Bess,  
Are set to eat their supper mess ;  
And little Tom, and roguish Kate,  
Are swinging on the meadow gate.  
Now they chat of various things,  
Of taxes, ministers, and kings,  
Or else tell all the village news,  
How madam did the squire refuse ; 40  
How parson on his tithes was bent,  
And landlord oft distrained for rent.  
Thus do they talk, till in the sky  
The pale eyed moon is mounted high,  
And from the ale house drunken Ned  
Had reel'd—then hasten all to bed.  
The mistress sees that lazy Kate  
The happing coal on kitchen grate  
Has laid—while master goes throughout,  
Sees shutters fast, the mastiff out, 50  
The candles safe, the hearths all clear,  
And nought from thieves or fire to fear ;  
Then both to bed together creep,  
And join the general troop of sleep.

## TO CONTEMPLATION

COME, pensive sage, who lov'st to dwell  
 In some retired Lapponian cell,  
 Where, far from noise and riot rude,  
 Resides sequestered Solitude.  
 Come, and o'er my longing soul  
 Throw thy dark and russet stole,  
 And open to my duteous eyes,  
 The volume of thy mysteries.

I will meet thee on the hill,  
 Where, with printless footsteps still 10  
 The morning in her buskin gray,  
 Springs upon her eastern way ;  
 While the frolic zephyrs stir,  
 Playing with the gossamer,  
 And, on ruder pinions borne,  
 Shake the dew-drops from the thorn.  
 There, as o'er the fields we pass,  
 Brushing with hasty feet the grass,  
 We will startle from her nest  
 The lively lark with speckled breast, 20  
 And hear the floating clouds among  
 Her gale-transported matin song,  
 Or on the upland stile embower'd,  
 With fragrant hawthorn snowy flower'd,  
 Will sauntering sit, and listen still  
 To the herdsman's oaten quill,

Wafted from the plain below ;  
Or the heifer's frequent low ;  
Or the milkmaid in the grove,  
Singing of one that died for love. 30  
Or when the noontide heats oppress,  
We will seek the dark recess,  
Where, in th' embower'd translucent stream,  
The cattle shun the sultry beam,  
And o'er us on the marge reclined,  
The drowsy fly her horn shall wind,  
While Echo, from her ancient oak,  
Shall answer to the woodman's stroke ;  
Or the little peasant's song,  
Wandering lone the glens among, 40  
His artless lip with berries dyed,  
And feet through ragged shoes descried.

But oh ! when evening's virgin queen  
Sits on her fringed throne serene,  
And mingling whispers rising near,  
Steal on the still reposing ear :  
While distant brooks decaying round,  
Augment the mixed dissolving sound,  
And the zephyr flitting by,  
Whispers mystic harmony, 50  
We will seek the woody lane,  
By the hamlet, on the plain,  
Where the weary rustic nigh,  
Shall whistle his wild melody,  
And the croaking wicket oft  
Shall echo from the neighbouring croft ;

And as we trace the green path lone,  
 With moss and rank weeds overgrown,  
 We will muse on pensive lore  
 Till the full soul brimming o'er, 60  
 Shall in our upturn'd eyes appear,  
 Embodied in a quivering tear.  
 Or else, serenely silent, set  
 By the brawling rivulet,  
 Which on its calm unruffled breast,  
 Bears the old mossy arch impress'd,  
 That clasps its secret stream of glass  
 Half hid in shrubs and waving grass,  
 The wood-nymph's lone secure retreat,  
 Unpress'd by fawn or sylvan's feet, 70  
 We'll watch in eve's ethereal braid,  
 The rich vermilion slowly fade ;  
 Or catch, faint twinkling from afar,  
 The first glimpse of the eastern star,  
 Fair Vesper, mildest lamp of light,  
 That heralds in imperial night ;  
 Meanwhile, upon our wandering ear,  
 Shall rise, though low, yet sweetly clear,  
 The distant sounds of pastoral lute,  
 Invoking soft the sober suit 80  
 Of dimmest darkness—fitting well  
 With love, or sorrow's pensive spell,  
 (So erst did music's silver tone  
 Wake slumbering Chaos on his throne.)  
 And haply then, with sudden swell,  
 Shall roar the distant curfew bell,

While in the castle's mouldering tower,  
The hooting owl is heard to pour  
Her melancholy song, and scare  
Dull Silence brooding in the air. 90  
Meanwhile her dusk and slumbering car,  
Black-suited Night drives on from far,  
And Cynthia, 'merging from her rear,  
Arrests the waxing darkness drear,  
And summons to her silent call,  
Sweeping, in their airy pall,  
The unshrived ghosts, in fairy trance,  
To join her moonshine morrice-dance ;  
While around the mystic ring  
The shadowy shapes elastic spring, 100  
Then with a passing shriek they fly,  
Wrapt in mists, along the sky,  
And oft are by the shepherd seen,  
In his lone night-watch on the green.

Then, hermit, let us turn our feet  
To the low abbey's still retreat,  
Embowered in the distant glen,  
Far from the haunts of busy men,  
Where, as we sit upon the tomb,  
The glow-worm's light may gild the gloom, 110  
And show to Fancy's saddest eye,  
Where some lost hero's ashes lie.  
And oh, as through the mouldering arch,  
With Ivy fill'd and weeping larch,  
The night-gale whispers sadly clear,  
Speaking drear things to Fancy's ear,

We'll hold communion with the shade  
 Of some deep-wailing, ruin'd maid—  
 Or call the ghost of Spencer down,  
 To tell of woe and fortune's frown ; 120  
 And bid us cast the eye of hope  
 Beyond this bad world's narrow scope.  
 Or if these joys, to us denied,  
 To linger by the forest's side ;  
 Or in the meadow, or the wood,  
 Or by the lone romantic flood ;  
 Let us in the busy town,  
 When sleep's dull streams the people drown,  
 Far from drowsy pillows flee,  
 And turn the church's massy key ; 130  
 Then, as through the painted glass  
 The moon's faint beams obscurely pass ;  
 And darkly on the trophied wall,  
 Her faint ambiguous shadows fall ;  
 Let us, while the faint winds wail,  
 Through the long reluctant aisle,  
 As we pace with reverence meet,  
 Count the echoings of our feet ;  
 While from the tombs, with confess'd breath,  
 Distinct responds the voice of death. 140  
 If thou, mild sage, wilt condescend,  
 Thus on my footsteps to attend,  
 To thee my lonely lamp shall burn  
 By fallen Genius' sainted urn,  
 As o'er the scroll of Time I pore,  
 And sagely spell of ancient lore,

Till I can rightly guess of all  
That Plato could to memory call,  
And scan the formless views of things,  
Or with old Egypt's fetter'd kings, 150  
Arrange the mystic trains that shine  
In night's high philosophic mine ;  
And to thy name shall e'er belong  
The honours of undying song.

## PASTORAL SONG

COME, Anna ! come, the morning dawns,  
Faint streaks of radiance tinge the skies :  
Come, let us seek the dewy lawns,  
And watch the early lark arise ;  
While Nature, clad in vesture gay,  
Hails the loved return of day.

Our flocks, that nip the scanty blade  
Upon the moor, shall seek the vale ;  
And then, secure beneath the shade,  
We'll listen to the throstle's tale ; 10  
And watch the silver clouds above,  
As o'er the azure vault they rove.

Come, Anna ! come, and bring thy lute,  
That with its tones, so softly sweet,  
In cadence with my mellow flute,  
We may beguile the noontide heat ;

While near the mellow bee shall join,  
To raise a harmony divine.

And then at eve, when silence reigns,  
Except when heard the beetle's hum, 20  
We'll leave the sober-tinted plains,  
To these sweet heights again we'll come ;  
And thou to thy soft lute shalt play  
A solemn vesper to departing day.

## VERSES

WHEN pride and envy, and the scorn  
Of wealth, my heart with gall embued,  
I thought how pleasant were the morn  
Of silence, in the solitude ;  
To hear the forest bee on wing,  
Or by the stream, or woodland spring,  
To lie and muse alone—alone,  
While the twinkling waters moan,  
Or such wild sounds arise, as say,  
Man and noise are far away. 10

Now, surely, thought I, there's enow  
To fill life's dusty way ;  
And who will miss a poet's feet,  
Or wonder where he stray :

So to the woods and waste I'll go,  
 And I will build an osier bower ;  
 And sweetly there to me shall flow  
 The meditative hour.

And when the Autumn's withering hand  
 Shall strew with leaves the sylvan land, 20  
 I'll to the forest caverns hie :  
 And in the dark and stormy nights  
 I'll listen to the shrieking sprites,  
 Who, in the wintry wolds and floods,  
 Keep jubilee, and shred the woods ;  
 Or, as it drifted soft and slow,  
 I hurl in ten thousand shapes the snow.

\* \* \* \*

## ODE TO THOUGHT

Written at midnight

## I

HENCE away, vindictive Thought !  
 Thy pictures are of pain ;  
 The visions through thy dark eye caught,  
 They with no gentle charms are fraught,  
 So prithee back again.  
 I would not weep,  
 I wish to sleep,  
 Then why, thou busy foe, with me thy vigils keep ?

## II

Why dost o'er bed and couch recline?  
 Is this thy new delight? 10  
 Pale visitant, is it not thine  
 To keep thy sentry through the mine,  
 The dark vault of the night :  
 'Tis thine to die,  
 While o'er the eye  
 The dews of slumber press, and waking sorrows fly.

## III

Go thou, and bide with him who guides  
 His bark through lonely seas ;  
 And as reclining on his helm,  
 Sadly he remarks the starry realm, 20  
 To him thou mayst bring ease ;  
 But thou to me  
 Art misery,  
 So prithee, prithee, plume thy wings, and from my  
 pillow flee.

## IV

And, Memory, pray what art thou?  
 Art thou of pleasure born?  
 Does bliss untainted from thee flow?  
 The rose that gems thy pensive brow,  
 Is it without a thorn?  
 With all thy smiles, 30  
 And witching wiles,  
 Yet not unfrequent bitterness thy mournful sway  
 defiles.

## V

The drowsy night-watch has forgot  
To call the solemn hour ;  
Lull'd by the winds he slumbers deep,  
While I in vain, capricious Sleep,  
Invoke thy tardy power ;  
And restless lie,  
With unclosed eye,  
And count the tedious hours as slow they minute  
by. 40

## GENIUS

## AN ODE

## I. I

MANY there be, who, through the vale of life,  
With velvet pace, unnoticed, softly go,  
While jarring Discord's inharmonious strife  
Awakes them not to woe.  
By them unheeded, carking Care,  
Green-eyed Grief, and dull Despair ;  
Smoothly they pursue their way.  
With even tenor and with equal breath,  
Alike through cloudy and through sunny day,  
Then sink in peace to death. 10

II. I

But, ah ! a few there be whom griefs devour,  
 And weeping Woe, and Disappointment keen,  
 Repining Penury, and Sorrow sour,  
 And self-consuming Spleen.  
 And these are Genius' favourites : these  
 Know the thought-throned mind to please,  
 And from her fleshy seat to draw  
 To realms where Fancy's golden orbits roll,  
 Disdaining all but 'wildering Rapture's law,  
 The captivated soul. 20

III. I

Genius, from thy starry throne,  
 High above the burning zone,  
 In radiant robe of light array'd,  
 Oh ! hear the plaint by thy sad favourite made,  
 His melancholy moan.  
 He tells of scorn, he tells of broken vows,  
 Of sleepless nights, of anguish-ridden days,  
 Pangs that his sensibility uprouse  
 To curse his being and his thirst for praise.  
 Thou gav'st to him with treble force to feel 30  
 The sting of keen neglect, the rich man's  
 scorn ;  
 And what o'er all does in his soul preside  
 Predominant, and tempers him to steel,  
 His high indignant pride.

## I. 2

Lament not ye, who humbly steal through life,  
That Genius visits not your lowly shed ;  
For, ah, what woes and sorrows ever rife  
Distract his hapless head !  
For him awaits no balmy sleep,  
He wakes all night, and wakes to weep ; 40  
Or by his lonely lamp he sits  
At solemn midnight when the peasant sleeps  
In feverish study, and in moody fits  
His mournful vigils keeps.

## II. 2

And, oh ! for what consumes his watchful oil ?  
For what does thus he waste life's fleeting  
breath ?  
'Tis for neglect and penury he doth toil,  
'Tis for untimely death.  
Lo ! where dejected pale he lies,  
Despair depicted in his eyes, 50  
He feels the vital flame decrease,  
He sees the grave wide-yawning for its prey,  
Without a friend to soothe his soul to peace,  
And cheer the expiring ray.

## III. 2

By Sulmo's bard of mournful fame,  
By gentle Otway's magic name,  
By him, the youth, who smiled at death,  
And rashly dared to stop his vital breath,  
Will I thy pangs proclaim ;

For still to misery closely thou'rt allied, 60  
 Though gaudy pageants glitter by thy side,  
 And far-resounding Fame.

What though to thee the dazzled millions bow,  
 And to thy posthumous merit bend them low ;  
 Though unto thee the monarch looks with awe,  
 And thou at thy flash'd car dost nations draw,  
 Yet, ah ! unseen behind thee fly

Corroding Anguish, soul-subduing Pain,  
 And Discontent that clouds the fairest sky :

A melancholy train. 70

Yes, Genius, thee a thousand cares await,  
 Mocking thy derided state ;

Thee chill Adversity will still attend,  
 Before whose face flies fast the summer's friend,  
 And leaves thee all forlorn ;

While leaden Ignorance rears her head and laughs,  
 And fat Stupidity shakes his jolly sides,

And while the cup of affluence he quaffs

With bee-eyed Wisdom, Genius derides, 80  
 Who toils, and every hardship doth outbrave,  
 To gain the meed of praise, when he is mouldering  
 in his grave.

## SONNETS

## I

## TO DECEMBER

DARK visaged visitor, who comest here  
Clad in thy mournful tunic, to repeat  
(While glooms and chilling rains enwrap thy feet)  
The solemn requiem of the dying year,  
Not undelightful to my list'ning ear  
Sound thy dull show'rs, as, o'er my woodland seat,  
Dismal, and drear, the leafless trees they beat :  
Not undelightful, in their wild career,  
Is the wild music of thy howling blasts,  
Sweeping the grove's long aisle, while sullen  
Time 10  
Thy stormy mantle o'er his shoulder casts,  
And, rock'd upon his throne, with chant sublime,  
Joins the full-pealing dirge, and winter weaves  
Her dark sepulchral wreath of faded leaves.

## II

POOR little one ! most bitterly did pain,  
And life's worst ills, assail thine early age ;  
And, quickly tir'd with this rough pilgrimage,  
Thy wearied spirit did its heaven regain.

Moaning, and sickly, on the lap of life

Thou laid'st thine aching head, and thou didst sigh

A little while, ere to its kindred sky

Thy soul return'd, to taste no more of strife !

Thy lot was happy, little sojourner !

Thou had'st no mother to direct thy ways ; 10

And fortune frown'd most darkly on thy days,

Short as they were. Now, far from the low stir

Of this dim spot, in heaven thou dost repose,

And look'st and smil'st on this world's transient  
woes.

### III

## TO THE MOON

Written in November

SUBLIME, emerging from the misty verge

Of the horizon dim, thee, Moon, I hail,

As sweeping o'er the leafless grove, the gale

Seems to repeat the year's funereal dirge.

Now Autumn sickens on the languid sight,

And leaves bestrew the wanderer's lonely way,

Now unto thee, pale arbitress of night,

With double joy my homage do I pay.

When clouds disguise the glories of the day,

And stern November sheds her boisterous blight, 10

How doubly sweet to mark the moony ray

Shoot through the mist from the ethereal height,

And, *still unchanged*, back to the memory bring

The smiles Favonian of life's earliest spring.

## IV

As thus oppress'd with many a heavy care,  
    (Though young yet sorrowful,) I turn my feet  
    To the dark woodland, longing much to greet  
The form of Peace, if chance she sojourn there ;  
Deep thought and dismal, verging to despair,  
    Fills my sad breast ; and, tired with this vain coil,  
I shrink dismay'd before life's upland toil.  
And as amid the leaves the evening air  
Whispers still melody,—I think ere long,  
    When I no more can hear, these woods will  
        speak ; 10  
And then a sad smile plays upon my cheek,  
And mournful phantasies upon me throng,  
And I do ponder with most strange delight,  
On the calm slumbers of the dead man's night.

## V

## TO APRIL

EMBLEM of life ! see changeful April sail  
    In varying vest along the shadowy skies,  
    Now bidding Summer's softest zephyrs rise,  
Anon, recalling Winter's stormy gale,  
And pouring from the cloud her sudden hail ;  
    Then, smiling through the tear that dims her eyes,  
    While Iris with her braid the welkin dyes,  
Promise of sunshine, not so prone to fail.

So, to us, sojourners in Life's low vale,  
 The smiles of Fortune flatter to deceive,                    10  
 While still the Fates the web of Misery weave ;  
 So Hope exultant spreads her æry sail,  
 And from the present gloom the soul conveys  
 To distant summers and far happier days.

## VI

YE unseen spirits, whose wild melodies,  
 At evening rising slow, yet sweetly clear,  
 Steal on the musing poet's pensive ear,  
 As by the wood-spring stretch'd supine he lies,  
 When he who now invokes you low is laid,  
 His tired frame resting on the earth's cold bed.  
 Hold ye your nightly vigils o'er his head,  
 And chaunt a dirge to his reposing shade !  
 For he was wont to love your madrigals ;  
 And often by the haunted stream that laves                    10  
 The dark sequester'd woodland's inmost caves,  
 Would sit and listen to the dying falls,  
 Till the full tear would quiver in his eye,  
 And his big heart would heave with mournful ecstasy.

VII  
TO A TAPER

'Tis midnight—On the globe dead slumber sits,  
And all is silence—in the hour of sleep ;  
Save when the hollow gust, that swells by fits,  
In the dark wood roars fearfully and deep.  
I wake alone to listen and to weep,  
To watch, my taper, thy pale beacon burn  
And, as still Memory does her vigils keep,  
To think of days that never can return.  
By thy pale ray I raise my languid head,  
My eye surveys the solitary gloom ;  
And the sad meaning tear, unmixt with dread,  
Tells thou dost light me to the silent tomb.  
Like thee I wane ;—like thine my life's last ray  
Will fade in loneliness, unwept, away.

10

VIII  
TO CONSUMPTION

GENTLY, most gently, on thy victim's head,  
Consumption, lay thine hand !—let me decay,  
Like the expiring lamp, unseen, away.  
And softly go to slumber with the dead.  
And if 'tis true, what holy men have said,  
That strains angelic oft foretell the day  
Of death, to those good men who fall thy prey,  
O let the aerial music round my bed,

Dissolving sad in dying symphony,  
 Whisper the solemn warning in mine ear : 10  
 That I may bid my weeping friends good-bye  
 Ere I depart upon my journey drear :  
 And, smiling faintly on the painful past,  
 Compose my decent head, and breathe my last.

## IX

WHEN I sit musing on the chequer'd past,  
 (A term much darken'd with untimely woes,)  
 My thoughts revert to her, for whom still flows  
 The tear, though half disown'd ;—and binding fast  
 Pride's stubborn cheat to my too yielding heart,  
 I say to her she robb'd me of my rest,  
 When that was all my wealth.—'Tis true my breast  
 Received from her this wearying, lingering smart,  
 Yet, ah ! I cannot bid her form depart ;  
 Though wrong'd, I love her—yet in anger love, 10  
 For she was most unworthy.—Then I prove  
 Vindictive joy ; and on my stern front gleams,  
 Throned in dark clouds, inflexible \* \* \*  
 The native pride of my much injured heart.

## OR SHOULD THE DAY

OR should the day be overcast,  
 We'll linger till the show'r be past ;  
 Where the hawthorn's branches spread  
 A fragrant covert o'er the head.

And list the rain-drops beat the leaves,  
Or smoke upon the cottage eaves ;  
Or silent dimpling on the stream  
Convert to lead its silver gleam ;  
And we will muse on human life,  
And think, from all the storms of strife, 10  
How sweet to find a snug retreat  
Where we may hear the tempests beat,  
Secure and fearless,—and provide  
Repose for life's calm eventide.

## NELSONI MORS

YET once again, my Harp, yet once again,  
One ditty more, and on the mountain ash  
I will again suspend thee. I have felt  
The warm tear frequent on my cheek, since last,  
At eventide, when all the winds were hush'd,  
I woke to thee the melancholy song.  
Since then with *Thoughtfulness*, a maid severe,  
I've journey'd, and have learn'd to shape the freaks  
Of frolic fancy to the line of truth ;  
Not unrepining, for my froward heart, 10  
Still turns to thee, mine Harp, and to the flow  
Of spring-gales past—the woods and storied haunts  
Of my not songless boyhood.—Yet once more,  
Not fearless, I will wake thy tremulous tones,  
My long neglected Harp.—He must not sink ;

The good, the brave—he must not, shall not sink  
Without the meed of some melodious tear.

Though from the Muse's chalice I may pour  
No precious dew of Aganippe's well,  
Or Castaly,—though from the morning cloud 20  
I fetch no hues to scatter on his hearse :  
Yet will I wreath a garland for his brows,  
Of simple flowers, such as the hedge-rows scent  
Of Britain, my loved country ; and with tears  
Most eloquent, yet silent, I will bathe  
Thy honour'd corse, my *Nelson*, tears as warm  
And *honest* as the ebbing blood that flow'd  
Fast from thy *honest* heart.—Thou, Pity, too,  
If ever I have loved, with faltering step,  
To follow thee in the cold and starless night, 30  
To the top-crag of some rain-beaten cliff ;  
And as I heard the deep gun bursting loud  
Amid the pauses of the storm, have pour'd  
Wild strains, and mournful, to the hurrying winds,  
The dying soul's *viaticum* ; if oft  
Amid the carnage of the field I've sate  
With thee upon the moonlight throne, and sung  
To cheer the fainting soldier's dying soul,  
With mercy and forgiveness—visitant  
Of Heaven—sit thou upon my harp, 40  
And give it feeling, which were else too cold  
For argument so great, for theme so high.

How dimly on that morn the sun arose,  
Kerchieft in mists, and tearful, when——

## HYMNS

## I

In Heaven we shall be purified, so as to be able to endure  
the splendours of the Deity

## I

AWAKE, sweet harp of Judah, wake,  
Retune thy strings for Jesus' sake ;  
We sing the Saviour of our race,  
The Lamb, our shield, and hiding place.

## II

When God's right arm is bared for war,  
And thunders clothe his cloudy car,  
Where, where, oh where, shall man retire,  
To escape the horrors of his ire?

## III

'Tis he, the Lamb, to him we fly,  
While the dread tempest passes by ;                    10  
God sees his Well-beloved's face;  
And spares us in our hiding place.

## IV

Thus while we dwell in this low scene,  
The Lamb is our unfailing screen ;  
To him, though guilty, still we run,  
And God still spares us for his Son.

## V

While yet we sojourn here below,  
 Pollutions still our hearts o'erflow ;  
 Fallen, abject, mean, a sentenced race,  
 We deeply need a hiding place. 20

## VI

Yet courage—days and years will glide,  
 And we shall lay these clods aside ;  
 Shall be baptized in Jordan's flood,  
 And wash'd in Jesus' cleansing blood.

## VII

Then pure, immortal, sinless, freed,  
 We through the Lamb shall be decreed ;  
 Shall meet the Father face to face,  
 And need no more a hiding place.

## II

## A HYMN

## FOR FAMILY WORSHIP

## I

O LORD, another day is flown,  
 And we, a lonely band,  
 Are met once more before thy throne,  
 To bless thy fostering hand.

## II

And wilt thou bend a listening ear,  
To praises low as ours?  
Thou wilt ! for thou dost love to hear  
The song which meekness pours.

## III

And, Jesus, thou thy smiles will deign,  
As we before thee pray ; 10  
For thou didst bless the infant train,  
And we are less than they.

## IV

Oh let thy grace perform its part,  
And let contention cease ;  
And shed abroad in every heart  
Thine everlasting peace !

## V

Thus chasten'd, cleans'd, entirely thine,  
A flock by Jesus led ;  
The Sun of Holiness shall shine,  
In glory on our head. 20

## VI

And thou wilt turn our wandering feet,  
And thou wilt bless our way ;  
Till worlds shall fade, and faith shall greet  
The dawn of lasting day.

## III

## THE STAR OF BETHLEHEM

## I

WHEN marshall'd on the nightly plain,  
     The glittering host bestud the sky ;  
 One star alone, of all the train,  
     Can fix the sinner's wandering eye.

## II

Hark ! hark ! to God the chorus breaks,  
     From every host, from every gem ;  
 But one alone the Saviour speaks,  
     It is the Star of Bethlehem.

## III

Once on the raging seas I rode,  
     The storm was loud,—the night was dark, 10  
 The ocean yawn'd—and rudely blow'd  
     The wind that toss'd my foundering bark.

## IV

Deep horror then my vitals froze,  
     Death-struck, I ceased the tide to stem ;  
 When suddenly a star arose,  
     It was the Star of Bethlehem.

## V

It was my guide, my light, my all,  
It bade my dark forebodings cease ;  
And through the storm and dangers' thrall,  
It led me to the port of peace. 20

## VI

Now safely moor'd—my perils o'er,  
I'll sing, first in night's diadem,  
For ever and for evermore,  
The star !—The Star of Bethlehem.

## IV

## A HYMN

O LORD, my God, in mercy turn,  
In mercy hear a sinner mourn !  
To thee I call, to thee I cry,  
O leave me, leave me not to die !

I strove against thee, Lord, I know,  
I spurn'd thy grace, I mock'd thy law ;  
The hour is past—the day's gone by,  
And I am left alone to die.

O pleasures past, what are ye now  
But thorns about my bleeding brow ! 10  
Spectres that hover round my brain,  
And aggravate and mock my pain.

For pleasure I have given my soul ;  
 Now, Justice, let thy thunders roll !  
 Now Vengeance smile—and with a blow,  
 Lay the rebellious ingrate low.

Yet, Jesus, Jesus ! there I'll cling,  
 I'll crowd beneath his sheltering wing ;  
 I'll clasp the cross, and holding there,  
 Even me, oh bliss !—his wrath may spare. 20

## V

THE Lord our God is full of might,  
 The winds obey his will :  
 He speaks, and in his heavenly height  
 The rolling sun stands still :

Rebel, ye waves, and o'er the land  
 With threatening aspect roar !  
 The Lord uplifts his awful hand,  
 And chains you to the shore.

Howl, winds of night ; your force combine !  
 Without his high behest, 10  
 Ye shall not, in the mountain-pine,  
 Disturb the sparrow's nest !

His voice sublime is heard afar,  
 In distant peals it dies ;  
 He yokes the whirlwinds to his car,  
 And sweeps the howling skies.

Ye nations, bend,—in reverence bend ;  
 Ye monarchs, wait his nod ;  
 And bid the choral song ascend,  
 To celebrate your God. 20

MELODY

Inserted in a Collection of Selected and Original Songs,  
 published by the Rev. J. Plumptre, of Clare Hall,  
 Cambridge.

I

YES, once more that dying strain,  
 Anna, touch thy lute for me ;  
 Sweet, when Pity's tones complain,  
 Doubly sweet is melody.

II

While the Virtues thus enweave  
 Mildly soft the thrilling song,  
 Winter's long and lonesome eve  
 Glides unfelt, unseen, along.

III

Thus when life hath stolen away,  
 And the wintry night is near, 10  
 Thus shall Virtue's friendly ray  
 Age's closing evening cheer.

FANNY ! upon thy breast I may not lie !

Fanny ! thou dost not hear me when I speak !  
Where art thou, love ?—Around I turn my eye,  
And as I turn, the tear is on my cheek.

Was it a dream ? or did my love behold

Indeed my lonely couch ?—Methought the breath  
Fann'd not her bloodless lip ; her eye was cold

And hollow, and the livery of death  
Invested her pale forehead.—Sainted maid !

My thoughts oft rest with thee in thy cold grave, 10  
Through the long wintry night, when wind and  
wave

Rock the dark house where thy poor head is laid.

Yet, hush ! my fond heart, hush ! there is a shore  
Of better promise ; and I know at last,

When the long sabbath of the tomb is past,  
We two shall meet in Christ—to part no more.

## ODE TO LIBERTY

HENCE to thy darkest shades, dire Slavery, hence !

Thine icy touch can freeze,

Swift as the polar breeze,

The proud defying port of human sense.

Hence to thine Indian cave,

To where the tall canes whisper o'er thy rest,

Like the murmuring wave

Swept by the dank wing of the rapid west ;

And at the night's still noon,  
The lash'd Angolan, in his grated cell, 10  
Mix'd with the tiger's yell,  
Howls to the dull ear of the silent moon.

But come, thou goddess, blithe and free,  
Thou mountain-maid, sweet Liberty !  
With buskin'd knee, and bosom bare,  
Thy tresses floating in the air ;  
Come,—and treading on thy feet,  
Independence let me meet,  
Thy giant mate whose awful form  
Has often braved the bellowing storm ; 20  
And heard its angry spirit shriek,  
Rear'd on some promontory's beak  
Seen by the lonely fisher far,  
By the glimpse of flitting star.  
His awful bulk, in dusky shroud,  
Commixing with the pitchy cloud ;  
While at his feet the lightnings play,  
And the deep thunders die away.  
Goddess, come, and let us sail  
On the fresh reviving gale ; 30  
O'er dewy lawns, and forests lone,  
Till, lighting on some mountain stone,  
That scales the circumambient sky,  
We see a thousand nations lie,  
From Zembla's snows to Afric's heat,  
Prostrate beneath our frolic feet.

From Italy's luxuriant plains,  
Where everlasting summer reigns,

Why, goddess, dost thou turn away?  
 Didst thou never sojourn there? 40  
 Oh, yes, thou didst—but fall'n is Rome,  
 The pilgrim weeps her silent doom,  
 As at midnight, murmuring low,  
 Along the mouldering portico,  
 He hears the desolate wind career,  
 While the rank ivy whispers near.

Ill-fated Gaul! ambitious grasp  
 Bids thee again in slavery gasp;  
 Again the dungeon walls resound  
 The hopeless shriek, the groan profound. 50  
 But, lo, in yonder happy skies,  
 Helvetia's airy mountains rise,  
 And, oh, on her tall cliffs reclined,  
 Gay fancy, whispering to the wind,  
 As the wild herdsman's call is heard,  
 Tells me, that she, o'er all preferr'd  
 In every clime, in every zone,  
 Is Liberty's divinest throne.  
 Yet, whence that sigh? O goddess, say,  
 Has the tyrant's thirsty sway 60  
 Dared profane the sacred seat,  
 Thy long high-favour'd, best retreat?  
 It has! it has! away, away,  
 'To where the green isles woo the day,  
 Where thou art still supreme, and where  
 Thy pæans fill the floating air.

I HAVE A WISH

I HAVE a wish, and near my heart  
That wish lies buried ;  
To keep it there's a foolish part,  
For, oh ! it must not be,  
It must not, must not, be.

Why, my fond heart, why beat'st thou so ?  
The dream is fair to see—  
But bid the lovely flatterer go ;  
It must not, must not, be,  
Oh ! no, it must not be.

10

'Tis well this tear in secret falls,  
This weakness suits not me ;  
I know where sterner duty calls—  
It must not, cannot be,  
Oh ! no, it cannot be.

## FRAGMENTS

### I

Lo ! on the eastern summit, clad in gray,  
Morn, like a horseman girt for travel, comes,  
And from his tower of mist,  
Night's watchman hurries down.

### II

O PALE art thou, my lamp, and faint  
Thy melancholy ray :  
When the still night's unclouded saint  
Is walking on her way.  
Through my lattice leaf embower'd,  
Fair she sheds her shadowy beam,  
And o'er my silent sacred room,  
Casts a chequer'd twilight gloom ;  
I throw aside the learned sheet,  
I cannot choose but gaze, she looks so mildly  
sweet. 10

Sad vestal, why art thou so fair,  
Or why am I so frail ?

Methinks thou lookest kindly on me, Moon,  
And cheerest my lone hours with sweet regards !  
Surely like me thou'rt sad, but dost not speak  
Thy sadness to the cold unheeding crowd ;  
So mournfully composed, o'er yonder cloud  
Thou shinest, like a cresset, beaming far  
From the rude watch-tower, o'er the Atlantic wave.

## III

O GIVE me music—for my soul doth faint ;  
I'm sick of noise and care, and now mine ear  
Longs for some air of peace, some dying plaint,  
That may the spirit from its cell unsphere.

Hark how it falls ! and now it steals along,  
Like distant bells upon the lake at eve,  
When all is still ; and now it grows more strong,  
As when the choral train their dirges weave,  
Mellow and many-voiced ; where every close,  
O'er the old minster roof, in echoing waves  
reflows. 10

Oh ! I am rapt aloft. My spirit soars  
Beyond the skies, and leaves the stars behind.  
Lo ! angels lead me to the happy shores,  
And floating pæans fill the buoyant wind.  
Farewell ! base earth, farewell ! my soul is freed,  
Far from its clayey cell it springs,—

## IV

WHEN high romance o'er every wood and stream  
 Dark lustre shed, my infant mind to fire,  
 Spell-struck, and fill'd with many a wondering  
 dream,  
 First in the groves I woke the pensive lyre,  
 All there was mystery then, the gust that woke  
 The midnight echo with a spirit's dirge,  
 And unseen fairies would the moon invoke,  
 To their light morris by the restless surge.  
 Now to my sober'd thought with life's false smiles,  
 Too much \* \* \* 10  
 The vagrant Fancy spreads no more her wiles,  
 And dark forebodings now my bosom fill.

## V

ONCE more, and yet once more,  
 I give unto my harp a dark-woven lay;  
 I heard the waters roar,  
 I heard the flood of ages pass away.  
 O thou, stern spirit, who dost dwell  
 In thine eternal cell,  
 Noting, gray chronicler ! the silent years;  
 I saw thee rise,—I saw the scroll complete,  
 Thou spakest, and at thy feet  
 The universe gave way. 10

VI  
TIME <sup>1</sup>

## A POEM

GENIUS of musings, who, the midnight hour  
Wasting in woods or haunted forests wild,  
Dost watch Orion in his arctic tower,  
Thy dark eye fix'd as in some holy trance ;  
Or when the vollied lightnings cleave the air,  
And Ruin gaunt bestrides the winged storm,  
Sitt'st in some lonely watch-tower, where thy lamp,  
Faint-blazing, strikes the fisher's eye from far,  
And, 'mid the howl of elements, unmoved  
Dost ponder on the awful scene, and trace                    10  
The vast *effect* to its superior source,—  
Spirit, attend my lowly benison !  
For now I strike to themes of import high  
The solitary lyre ; and, borne by thee  
Above this narrow cell, I celebrate  
The mysteries of Time !

*Him* who, august,  
*Was* ere these worlds were fashioned,—ere the sun  
Sprang from the east, or Lucifer display'd  
His glowing cresset in the arch of morn,

<sup>1</sup> This Poem was begun either during the publication of Clifton Grove, or shortly afterwards. Henry never laid aside the intention of completing it, and some of the detached parts were among his latest productions. S.

Or Vesper gilded the serener eve. 20  
 Yea, He *had been* for an eternity !  
 Had swept unvarying from eternity !  
 The harp of desolation—ere his tones,  
 At God's command, assumed a milder strain,  
 And startled on his watch, in the vast deep,  
 Chaos's sluggish sentry, and evoked  
 From the dark void the smiling universe.  
 Chain'd to the grovelling frailties of the flesh,  
 Mere mortal man, unpurged from earthly dross,  
 Cannot survey, with fix'd and steady eye, 30  
 The dim uncertain gulf, which now the muse,  
 Adventurous, would explore ;—but dizzy grown,  
 He topples down the abyss.—If he would scan  
 The fearful chasm, and catch a transient glimpse  
 Of its unfathomable depths, that so  
 His mind may turn with double joy to God,  
 His only certainty and resting place ;  
 He must put off awhile this mortal vest,  
 And learn to follow, without giddiness,  
 To heights where all is vision, and surprise, 40  
 And vague conjecture.—He must waste by night  
 The studious taper, far from all resort  
 Of crowds and folly, in some still retreat ;  
 High on the beetling promontory's crest,  
 Or in the caves of the vast wilderness,  
 Where, compass'd round with Nature's wildest  
     shapes,  
 He may be driven to centre all his thoughts  
 In the great Architect, who lives confest  
 In rocks, and seas, and solitary wastes.

So has divine Philosophy, with voice 50  
Mild as the murmurs of the moonlight wave,  
Tutor'd the heart of him, who now awakes,  
Touching the chords of solemn minstrelsy,  
His faint, neglected song—intent to snatch  
Some vagrant blossom from the dangerous steep  
Of poesy, a bloom of such a hue,  
So sober, as may not unseemly suit  
With Truth's severer brow ; and one withal  
So hardy as shall brave the passing wind  
Of many winters,—rearing its meek head 60  
In loveliness, when he who gather'd it  
Is number'd with the generations gone.  
Yet not to me hath God's good providence  
Given studious leisure<sup>1</sup>, or unbroken thought,  
Such as he owns,—a meditative man,  
Who from the blush of morn to quiet eve  
Ponders, or turns the page of wisdom o'er,  
Far from the busy crowd's tumultuous din :  
From noise and wrangling far, and undisturb'd  
With Mirth's unholy shouts. For me the day 70  
Hath duties which require the vigorous hand  
Of steadfast application, but which leave  
No deep improving trace upon the mind.  
But be the day another's ;—let it pass !  
The night's my own—They cannot steal my night !  
When evening lights her folding-star on high,  
I live and breathe, and in the sacred hours  
Of quiet and repose, my spirit flies,

<sup>1</sup> The author was then in an attorney's office.

Free as the morning, o'er the realms of space,  
 And mounts the skies, and imp's her wing for  
 Heaven. 80

Hence do I love the sober-suited maid ;  
 Hence Night's my friend, my mistress, and my  
 theme,  
 And she shall aid me *now* to magnify  
 The night of ages,—*now* when the pale ray  
 Of star-light penetrates the studious gloom,  
 And, at my window seated, while mankind  
 Are lock'd in sleep, I feel the freshening breeze  
 Of stillness blow, while, in her saddest stole,  
*Thought*, like a wakeful vestal at her shrine,  
 Assumes her wonted sway.

Behold the world 90

Rests, and her tired inhabitants have paused  
 From trouble and turmoil. The widow now  
 Has ceased to weep, and her twin orphans lie  
 Lock'd in each arm, partakers of her rest.  
 The man of sorrow has forgot his woes ;  
 The outcast that his head is shelterless,  
 His griefs unshared.—The mother tends no more  
 Her daughter's dying slumbers, but, surprised  
 With heaviness, and sunk upon her couch,  
 Dreams of her bridals. Even the hectic, lull'd 100  
 On Death's lean arm to rest, in visions wrapt,  
 Crowning with Hope's bland wreath his shuddering  
 nurse,  
 Poor victim ! smiles. Silence and deep repose  
 Reign o'er the nations ; and the warning voice

Of Nature utters audibly within  
The general moral :—tells us that repose,  
Deathlike as this, but of far longer span,  
Is coming on us—that the weary crowds,  
Who now enjoy a temporary calm,  
Shall soon taste lasting quiet, wrapt around 110  
With grave-clothes : and their aching restless heads  
Mouldering in holes and corners unobserved,  
Till the last trump shall break their sullen sleep.

Who needs a teacher to admonish him  
That flesh is grass, that earthly things are mist ?  
What are our joys but dreams ? and what our hopes  
But goodly shadows in the summer cloud ?  
There's not a wind that blows but bears with it  
Some rainbow promise :—Not a moment flies  
But puts its sickle in the fields of life, 120  
And mows its thousands, with their joys and cares.  
'Tis but as yesterday since on yon stars,  
Which now I view, the Chaldee Shepherd<sup>1</sup> gazed  
In his mid-watch observant, and disposed  
The twinkling hosts as fancy gave them shape.  
Yet in the interim what mighty shocks  
Have buffeted mankind—whole nations razed—  
Cities made desolate,—the polish'd sunk  
To barbarism, and once barbaric states  
Swaying the wand of science and of arts ; 130  
Illustrious deeds and memorable names

<sup>1</sup> Alluding to the first astronomical observations made by the Chaldean shepherds.

Blotted from record, and upon the tongue  
Of gray Tradition, voluble no more.

Where are the heroes of the ages past ?  
Where the brave chieftains, where the mighty ones  
Who flourish'd in the infancy of days ?  
All to the grave gone down. On their fallen fame  
Exultant, mocking at the pride of man,  
Sits grim *Forgetfulness*.—The warrior's arm  
Lies nerveless on the pillow of its shame ; 140  
Hush'd is his stormy voice, and quench'd the blaze  
Of his red eye-ball.—Yesterday his name  
Was mighty on the earth—To-day—'tis what ?  
The meteor of the night of distant years,  
That flash'd unnoticed, save by wrinkled eld,  
Musing at midnight upon prophecies,  
Who at her lonely lattice saw the gleam  
Point to the mist-poised shroud, then quietly  
Closed her pale lips, and lock'd the secret up  
Safe in the charnel's treasures.

O how weak 150  
Is mortal man ! how trifling—how confined  
His scope of vision ! Puff'd with confidence,  
His phrase grows big with immortality,  
And he, poor insect of a summer's day !  
Dreams of eternal honours to his name ;  
Of endless glory and perennial bays.  
He idly reasons of eternity,  
As of the train of ages,—when, alas !  
Ten thousand thousand of his centuries  
Are, in comparison, a little point 160

Too trivial for accompt.—O, it is strange,  
'Tis passing strange, to mark his fallacies ;  
Behold him proudly view some pompous pile,  
Whose high dome swells to emulate the skies,  
And smile, and say, my name shall live with this  
Till Time shall be no more ; while at his feet,  
Yea, at his very feet, the crumbling dust  
Of the fallen fabric of the other day  
Preaches the solemn lesson.—He *should* know  
That time must conquer ; that the loudest blast 170  
That ever fill'd Renown's obstreperous trump  
Fades in the lapse of ages, and expires.  
Who lies inhumed in the terrific gloom  
Of the gigantic pyramid ? or who  
Rear'd its huge walls ? Oblivion laughs, and says,  
The prey is mine.—They sleep, and never more  
Their names shall strike upon the ear of man,  
Their memory burst its fetters.

Where is *Rome* ?

She lives but in the tale of other times ;  
Her proud pavilions are the hermit's home. 180  
And her long colonnades, her public walks,  
Now faintly echo to the pilgrim's feet,  
Who comes to muse in solitude, and trace,  
Through the rank moss reveal'd, her honour'd dust.  
But not to Rome alone has fate confined  
The doom of ruin ; cities numberless,  
Tyre, Sidon, Carthage, Babylon, and Troy,  
And rich Phœnicia—they are blotted out,  
Half-razed from memory, and their very name  
And *being* in dispute.—Has Athens fallen ? 190

Is polish'd Greece become the savage seat  
Of ignorance and sloth? and shall *we* dare

\* \* \*

And empire seeks another hemisphere.  
Where now is Britain?—Where her laurell'd names,  
Her palaces and halls? Dash'd in the dust.  
Some second Vandal hath reduced her pride,  
And with one big recoil hath thrown her back  
To primitive barbarity.—Again,  
Through her depopulated vales, the scream  
Of bloody Superstition hollow rings, 200  
And the scared native to the tempest howls  
The yell of deprecation. O'er her marts,  
Her crowded ports, broods Silence; and the cry  
Of the low curlew, and the pensive dash  
Of distant billows, breaks alone the void.  
Even as the savage sits upon the stone  
That marks where stood her capitols, and hears  
The bittern booming in the weeds, he shrinks  
From the dismaying solitude.—Her bards  
Sing in a language that hath perished; 210  
And their wild harps suspended o'er their graves,  
Sigh to the desert winds a dying strain.

Meanwhile the Arts, in second infancy,  
Rise in some distant clime, and then, perchance,  
Some bold adventurer, fill'd with golden dreams,  
Steering his bark through trackless solitudes,  
Where, to his wandering thoughts, no daring prow  
Hath ever plough'd before,—espies the cliffs  
Of fallen Albion.—To the land unknown

He journeys joyful ; and perhaps descries      220  
Some vestige of her ancient stateliness :  
Then he, with vain conjecture, fills his mind  
Of the unheard-of race, which had arrived  
At science in that solitary nook,  
Far from the civil world ; and sagely sighs,  
And moralizes on the state of man.

Still on its march, unnoticed and unfelt,  
Moves on our being. We do live and breathe,  
And we are gone. The spoiler heeds us not.  
We have our spring-time and our rottenness ;      230  
And as we fall, another race succeeds,  
To perish likewise.—Meanwhile Nature smiles—  
The seasons run their round—The sun fulfils  
His annual course—and Heaven and earth remain  
Still changing, yet unchanged—still doom'd to feel  
Endless mutation in perpetual rest.  
Where are conceal'd the days which have elapsed ?  
Hid in the mighty cavern of *the past*,  
They rise upon us only to appal,  
By indistinct and half-glimpsed images,      240  
Misty, gigantic, huge, obscure, remote.

Oh, it is fearful, on the midnight couch,  
When the rude rushing winds forget to rave,  
And the pale moon, that through the casement high  
Surveys the sleepless musc, stamps the hour  
Of utter silence, it is fearful then  
To steer the mind, in deadly solitude,  
Up the vague stream of probability ;

To wind the mighty secrets of *the past*,  
 And turn the key of Time?—Oh ! who can strive 250  
 To comprehend the vast, the awful truth,  
 Of the *eternity that hath gone by*,  
 And not recoil from the dismaying sense  
 Of human impotence? The life of man  
 Is summ'd in birth-days and in sepulchres :  
 But the Eternal God had no beginning ;  
 He hath no end. Time had been with him  
 For *everlasting*, ere the dædal world  
 Rose from the gulf in loveliness.—Like him  
 It knew no source, like him 'twas uncreate. 260  
 What is it then? The past Eternity !  
 We comprehend a *future* without end ;  
 We feel it possible that even yon sun  
 May roll for ever : but we shrink amazed—  
 We stand aghast, when we reflect that Time  
 Knew no commencement,—That heap age on age,  
 And million upon million, without end,  
 And we shall never span the void of days  
 That were, and are not but in retrospect.  
 The Past is an unfathomable depth, 270  
 Beyond the span of thought ; 'tis an elapse  
 Which hath no mensuration, but hath been  
 For ever and for ever.

Change of days

To us is sensible ; and each revolve  
 Of the recording sun conducts us on  
 Further in life, and nearer to our goal.  
 Not so with Time,—mysterious chronicler,  
 He knoweth not mutation ;—centuries

Are to his being as a day, and days  
 As centuries. —Time past, and Time to come, 280  
 Are always equal ; when the world began  
 God had existed from eternity.

\* \* \*

Now look on man

Myriads of ages hence. —Hath time elapsed ?  
 Is he not standing in the self-same place  
 Where once we stood ?—The same eternity  
 Hath gone before him, and is yet to come ;  
 His *past* is not of longer span than ours,  
 Though myriads of ages intervened ;  
 For who can add to what has neither sum,  
 Nor bound, nor source, nor estimate, nor end ! 290  
 Oh, who can compass the Almighty mind ?  
 Who can unlock the secrets of the High ?  
 In speculations of an altitude  
 Sublime as this, our reason stands confest  
 Foolish, and insignificant, and mean.  
 Who can apply the futile argument  
 Of finite beings to infinity ?  
 He might as well compress the universe  
 Into the hollow compass of a gourd,  
 Scoop'd out by human art ; or bid the whale 300  
 Drink up the sea it swims in !—Can the less  
 Contain the greater ? or the dark obscure  
 Enfold the glories of meridian day ?  
 What does Philosophy impart to man  
 But undiscover'd wonders ?—Let her soar  
 Even to her proudest heights—to where she caught  
 The soul of Newton and of Socrates,

She but extends the scope of wild amaze  
 And admiration. All her lessons end  
 In wider views of God's unfathom'd depths. 310

Lo ! the unletter'd hind, who never knew  
 To raise his mind excursive to the heights  
 Of abstract contemplation, as he sits  
 On the green hillock by the hedge-row side,  
 What time the insect swarms are murmuring,  
 And marks, in silent thought, the broken clouds  
 That fringe with loveliest hues the evening sky,  
 Feels in his soul the hand of Nature rouse  
 The thrill of gratitude, to him who form'd  
 The goodly prospect ; he beholds the God 320  
 Throned in the west, and his reposing ear  
 Hears sounds angelic in the fitful breeze  
 That floats through neighbouring copse or fairy brake,  
 Or lingers playful on the haunted stream.  
 Go with the cotter to his winter fire,  
 Where o'er the moors the loud blast whistles shrill,  
 And the hoarse ban-dog bays the icy moon ;  
 Mark with what awe he lists the wild uproar,  
 Silent, and big with thought ; and hear him bless  
 The God that rides on the tempestuous clouds 330  
 For his snug hearth, and all his little joys :  
 Hear him compare his happier lot with his  
 Who bends his way across the wintry wolds,  
 A poor night-traveller, while the dismal snow  
 Beats in his face, and, dubious of his path,  
 He stops, and thinks, in every lengthening blast,  
 He hears some village-mastiff's distant howl,

And sees, far-streaming, some lone cottage light ;  
Then, undeceived, upturns his streaming eyes,  
And clasps his shivering hands ; or, overpowered, 340  
Sinks on the frozen ground, weigh'd down with sleep,  
From which the hapless wretch shall never wake.  
Thus the poor rustic warms his heart with praise  
And glowing gratitude,—he turns to bless,  
With honest warmth, his Maker and his God !  
And shall it e'er be said, that a poor hind,  
Nursed in the lap of Ignorance, and bred  
In want and labour, glows with nobler zeal  
To laud his Maker's attributes, while he  
Whom starry Science in her cradle rock'd, 350  
And Castaly enchasten'd with its dews,  
Closes his eyes upon the holy word,  
And, blind to all but arrogance and pride,  
Dares to declare his infidelity,  
And openly condemn the Lord of Hosts ?  
What is philosophy, if it impart  
Irreverence for the Deity, or teach  
A mortal man to set his judgment up  
Against his Maker's will ?—The Polygar,  
Who kneels to sun or moon, compared with him 360  
Who thus perverts the talents he enjoys,  
Is the most bless'd of men !—Oh ! I would walk  
A weary journey, to the furthest verge  
Of the big world, to kiss that good man's hand,  
Who, in the blaze of wisdom and of art,  
Preserves a lowly mind ; and to his God,  
Feeling the sense of his own littleness,  
Is as a child in meek simplicity !

What is the pomp of learning ? the parade  
 Of letters and of tongues ? E'en as the mists 370  
 Of the grey morn before the rising sun,  
 That pass away and perish.

Earthly things

Are but the transient pageants of an hour ;  
 And earthly pride is like the passing flower,  
 That springs to fall, and blossoms but to die.  
 'Tis as the tower erected on a cloud,  
 Baseless and silly as the school-boy's dream.  
 Ages and epochs that destroy our pride,  
 And then record its downfall, what are they  
 But the poor creatures of man's teeming brain? 380  
 Hath Heaven its ages ? or doth Heaven preserve  
 Its stated æras ? Doth the Omnipotent  
 Hear of to-morrows or of yesterdays ?  
 There is to God nor future nor a past ;  
 Throned in his might, all times to him are present ;  
 He hath no lapse, no past, no time to come ;  
 He sees before him one eternal *now*.  
 Time moveth not !—our being 'tis that moves :  
 And we, swift gliding down life's rapid stream,  
 Dream of swift ages and revolving years, 390  
 Ordain'd to chronicle our passing days ;  
 So the young sailor in the gallant bark,  
 Scudding before the wind, beholds the coast  
 Receding from his eyes, and thinks the while,  
 Struck with amaze, that he is motionless,  
 And that the land is sailing.

Such, alas !

Are the illusions of this Proteus life ;

All, all is false : through every phasis still  
'Tis shadowy and deceitful. It assumes  
The semblances of things and specious shapes, 400  
But the lost traveller might as soon rely  
On the evasive spirit of the marsh,  
Whose lantern beams, and vanishes, and flits,  
O'er bog, and rock, and pit, and hollow way,  
As we on its appearances.

On earth  
There is nor certainty nor stable hope.  
As well as the weary mariner, whose bark  
Is toss'd beyond Cimmerian Bosphorus,  
Where Storm and Darkness hold their drear  
domain,  
And sunbeams never penetrate, might trust 410  
To expectation of serener skies,  
And linger in the very jaws of death,  
Because some peevish cloud were opening,  
Or the loud storm had bated in its rage ;  
As we look forward in this vale of tears  
To permanent delight—from some slight glimpse  
Of shadowy unsubstantial happiness.

The good man's hope is laid far, far beyond  
The sway of tempests, or the furious sweep  
Of mortal desolation.—He beholds, 420  
Unapprehensive, the gigantic stride  
Of rampant Ruin, or the unstable waves  
Of dark Vicissitude.—Even in death,  
In that dread hour, when with a giant pang,  
Tearing the tender fibres of the heart,

The immortal spirit struggles to be free,  
 Then, even then, that hope forsakes him not,  
 For it exists beyond the narrow verge  
 Of the cold sepulchre.—The petty joys  
 Of fleeting life indignantly it spurn'd, 430  
 And rested on the bosom of its God.  
 This is man's only reasonable hope ;  
 And 'tis a hope which, cherish'd in the breast,  
 Shall not be disappointed.—Even He,  
 The Holy One—Almighty—who elanced  
 The rolling world along its airy way,  
 Even He will deign to smile upon the good,  
 And welcome him to these celestial seats,  
 Where joy and gladness hold their changeless  
 reign.

Thou, proud man, look upon yon starry vault, 440  
 Survey the countless gems which richly stud,  
 The Night's imperial chariot ;—Telescopes  
 Will show thee myriads more innumeros  
 Than the sea sand ;—each of those little lamps  
 Is the great source of light, the central sun  
 Round which some other mighty sisterhood  
 Of planets travel, every planet stock'd  
 With living beings impotent as thee.  
 Now, proud man ! now, where is thy greatness  
 fled ?

What art thou in the scale of universe ? 450  
 Less, less than nothing !—Yet of thee the God  
 Who built this wondrous frame of worlds is careful,  
 As well as of the mendicant who begs  
 The leavings of thy table. And shalt thou

Lift up thy thankless spirit, and contemn  
His heavenly providence ! Deluded fool,  
Even now the thunderbolt is wing'd with death,  
Even now thou totterest on the brink of hell.

How insignificant is mortal man,  
Bound to the hasty pinions of an hour ; 460  
How poor, how trivial in the vast conceit  
Of infinite duration, boundless space !  
God of the universe ! Almighty One !  
Thou who dost walk upon the winged winds,  
Or with the storm thy rugged charioteer,  
Swift and impetuous as the northern blast,  
Ridest from pole to pole ; Thou who dost hold  
The forked lightnings in thine awful grasp,  
And reimest in the earthquake, when thy wrath  
Goes down towards erring man, I would address 470  
To Thee my parting pæan ; for of Thee,  
Great beyond comprehension, who thyself  
Art Time and Space, sublime Infinitude,  
Of Thee has been my song—With awe I kneel  
Trembling before the footstool of thy state,  
My God ! my Father !—I will sing to Thee  
A hymn of laud, a solemn canticle,  
Ere on the cypress wreath, which overshades  
The throne of Death, I hang my mournful lyre,  
And give its wild strings to the desert gale. 480  
Rise, Son of Salem ! rise, and join the strain,  
Sweep to accordant tones thy tuneful harp,  
And leaving vain laments, arouse thy soul  
To exultation. Sing hosanna, sing,

And hallelujah, for the Lord is great  
 And full of mercy ! He has thought of man ;  
 Yea, compass'd round with countless worlds, has  
                   thought

Of we poor worms, that batten in the dews  
 Of morn, and perish ere the noon-day sun.  
 Sing to the Lord, for He is merciful : 490

He gave the Nubian lion but to live,  
 To rage its hour, and perish ; but on man  
 He lavish'd immortality, and Heaven.

The eagle falls from her aerial tower,  
 And mingles with irrevocable dust :

But man from death springs joyful,  
 Springs up to life and to eternity.

Oh, that, insensate of the favouring boon,  
 The great exclusive privilege bestow'd

On us unworthy trifles, men should dare 500

To treat with slight regard the proffer'd Heaven,

And urge the lenient, but All-Just, to swear

In wrath, ' They shall not enter in my rest.'

Might I address the supplicative strain

To thy high footstool, I would pray that thou

Wouldst pity the deluded wanderers,

And fold them, ere they perish, in thy flock.

Yea, I would bid thee pity them, through Him,

Thy well-beloved, who, upon the cross,

Bled a dead sacrifice for human sin, 510

And paid, with bitter agony, the debt

Of primitive transgression.

Oh ! I shrink,

My very soul doth shrink, when I reflect

That the time hastens, when in vengeance clothed,  
Thou shalt come down to stamp the seal of fate  
On erring mortal man. Thy chariot wheels  
Then shall rebound to earth's remotest caves,  
And stormy Ocean from his bed shall start  
At the appalling summons. Oh ! how dread  
On the dark eye of miserable man, 520  
Chasing his sins in secrecy and gloom,  
Will burst the effulgence of the opening Heaven ;  
When to the brazen trumpet's deafening roar,  
Thou and thy dazzling cohorts shall descend,  
Proclaiming the fulfilment of the word !  
The dead shall start astonish'd from their sleep !  
The sepulchres shall groan and yield their prey,  
The bellowing floods shall disembody their charge  
Of human victims.—From the farthest nook  
Of the wide world shall troop their risen souls, 530  
From him whose bones are bleaching in the waste  
Of polar solitudes, or him whose corpse,  
Whelm'd in the loud Atlantic's vexed tides,  
Is wash'd on some Caribbean prominence,  
To the lone tenant of some secret cell  
In the Pacific's vast \* \* \* realm,  
Where never plummet's sound was heard to part  
The wilderness of water ; they shall come  
To greet the solemn advent of the Judge.  
Thou first shalt summon the elected saints, 540  
To their apportion'd Heaven ! and thy Son,  
At thy right hand, shall smile with conscious joy  
On all his past distresses, when for them  
He bore humanity's severest pangs.

Then shalt thou seize the avenging cimeter,  
 And, with a roar as loud and horrible  
 As the stern earthquake's monitory voice,  
 The wicked shall be driven to their abode,  
 Down the immitigable gulf, to wail  
 And gnash their teeth in endless agony. 550

\* \* \*

Rear thou aloft thy standard.—Spirit, rear  
 Thy flag on high!—Invincible, and throned  
 In unparticipated might. Behold  
 Earth's proudest boasts, beneath thy silent sway,  
 Sweep headlong to destruction, thou the while,  
 Unmoved and heedless, thou dost hear the rush  
 Of mighty generations, as they pass  
 To the broad gulf of ruin, and dost stamp  
 Thy signet on them, and they rise no more.  
 Who shall contend with Time—unvanquish'd Time,  
 The conqueror of conquerors, and lord 561  
 Of desolation?—Lo! the shadows fly,  
 The hours and days, and years and centuries,  
 They fly, they fly, and nations rise and fall.  
 The young are old, the old are in their graves.  
 Heard'st thou that shout? It rent the vaulted skies;  
 It was the voice of people,—mighty crowds,—  
 Again! 'tis hush'd—Time speaks, and all is hush'd;  
 In the vast multitude now reigns alone  
 Unruffled solitude. They all are still; 570  
 All—yea, the whole—the incalculable mass,  
 Still as the ground that clasps their cold remains.

Rear thou aloft thy standard.—Spirit, rear  
 Thy flag on high ! and glory in thy strength.  
 But do thou know the season yet shall come,  
 When from its base thine adamant throne  
 Shall tumble ; when thine arm shall cease to strike,  
 Thy voice forget its petrifying power ;  
 When saints shall shout, and *Time shall be no  
 more.*

Yea, He doth come — the Mighty Champion  
 comes 580

Whose potent spear shall give thee thy death-wound,  
 Shall crush the conqueror of conquerors,  
 And desolate stern Desolation's lord.  
 Lo ! where He cometh ! the Messiah comes !  
 The King ! the Comforter ! the Christ !—He comes  
 To burst the bonds of death, and overturn  
 The power of Time.—Hark ! the trumpet's blast  
 Rings o'er the heavens ! They rise, the myriads  
 rise—

Even from their graves they spring, and burst the  
 chains

Of torpor—He has ramson'd them, 590  
 \* \* \*

Forgotten generations live again,  
 Assume the bodily shapes they own'd of old,  
 Beyond the flood :—the righteous of their times  
 Embrace and weep, they weep the tears of joy.  
 Thy sainted mother wakes, and in her lap  
 Clasps her dear babe, the partner of her grave,  
 And heritor with her of Heaven,—a flower  
 Wash'd by the blood of Jesus from the stain

Of native guilt, even in its early bud.  
 And, hark ! those strains, how solemnly serene      600  
 They fall, as from the skies—at distance fall—  
 Again more loud—The hallelujah's swell ;  
 The newly-risen catch the joyful sound ;  
 They glow, they burn ; and now with one accord  
 Bursts forth sublime from every mouth the song  
 Of praise to God on high, and to the Lamb  
 Who bled for mortals.

\*           \*           \*

Yet there is peace for man.—Yea, there is peace  
 Even in this noisy, this unsettled scene ;  
 When from the crowd, and from the city far,      610  
 Haply he may be set (in his late walk  
 O'ertaken with deep thought) beneath the boughs  
 Of honeysuckle, when the sun is gone,  
 And with fixt eye, and wistful, he surveys  
 The solemn shadows of the Heavens sail,  
 And thinks the season yet shall come, when Time  
 Will waft him to repose, to deep repose,  
 Far from the unquietness of life—from noise  
 And tumult far—beyond the flying clouds,  
 Beyond the stars, and all this passing scene,      620  
 Where change shall cease, and Time shall be no  
 more.

\*           \*           \*

## VII

WHERE yonder woods in gloomy pomp arise,  
Embow'ed, remote, a lowly cottage lies ;  
Before the door a garden spreads, where blows  
Now wild, once cultivate, the brier rose ;  
Tho' chok'd with weeds, the lily there will peer,  
And early primrose hail the nascent year ;  
There to the walls did jess'mine wreaths attach,  
And many a sparrow twitter'd in the thatch,  
While in the woods that wave their heads on high  
The stock-dove warbled murmuring harmony. 10  
There, buried in retirement, dwelt a sage,  
Whose reverent locks bespoke him far in age ;  
Silent he was, and solemn was his mien,  
And rarely on his cheek a smile was seen.  
The village gossips had full many a tale  
About the aged ' hermit of the dale.'  
Some called him wizard, some a holy seer,  
Tho' all beheld him with an equal fear,  
And many a stout heart had he put to flight,  
Met in the gloomy wood-walk late at night. 20

Yet, well I ween, the sire was good of heart,  
Nor would to aught one heedless pang impart ;  
His soul was gentle, but he'd known of woe,  
Had known the world, nor longer wish'd to know.  
Here, far retir'd from all its busy ways,  
He hop'd to spend the remnant of his days ;

And here, in peace, he till'd his little ground,  
 And saw, unheeded, years revolving round.  
 Fair was his daughter, as the blush of day,  
 In her alone his hopes and wishes lay ; 30  
 His only care, about her future life,  
 When death should call him from the haunts of strife.  
 Sweet was her temper, mild as summer skies  
 When o'er their azure no thin vapour flies :  
 And but to see her aged father sad,  
 No fear, no care, the gentle Fanny had.

Still at her wheel, the live-long day she sung,  
 Till with the sound the lonesome woodlands rung,  
 And, 'till usurp'd his long unquestioned sway,  
 The solitary bittern wing'd its way, 40  
 Indignant rose, on dismal pinions borne,  
 To find, untrod by man, some waste forlorn ;  
 Where, unmolested, he might hourly wail,  
 And with his screams still load the heavy gale.

Once as I stray'd at eve, the woods among,  
 To pluck wild strawberries,—I heard her song ;  
 And heard, enchanted,—oh, it was so soft,  
 So sweet, I thought the cherubim aloft  
 Were quiring to the spheres. Now the full note  
 Did on the downy wings of silence float 50  
 Full on the ravish'd sense, then died away,  
 Distantly on the ear, in sweet decay.  
 Then, first I knew the cot ; the simple pair ;  
 Tho' soon become a welcome inmate there :  
 At eve, I still would fly to hear the lay,  
 Which Fanny to her lute was wont to play ;

Or with the sire, would sit and talk of war,  
 For wars he'd seen, and bore full many a scar,  
 And oft the plan of gallant siege he drew,  
 And lov'd to teach me all the arts he knew. 60

\* \* \*

## VIII

LOUD rage the winds without.—The wintry cloud  
 O'er the cold north star casts her flitting shroud ;  
 And Silence, pausing in some snow-clad dale,  
 Starts as she hears, by fits, the shrieking gale ;  
 Where now, shut out from every still retreat,  
 Her pine-clad summit, and her woodland seat,  
 Shall Meditation, in her saddest mood,  
 Retire o'er all her pensive stores to brood ?  
 Shivering and blue the peasant eyes askance  
 The drifted fleeces that around him dance, 10  
 And hurries on his half-averted form,  
 Stemming the fury of the side-long storm.  
 Him soon shall greet his snow-topt [cot of thatch,]  
 Soon shall his 'numb'd hand tremble on the latch,  
 Soon from his chimney's nook the cheerful flame,  
 Diffuse a genial warmth throughout his frame ;  
 Round the light fire, while roars the north wind loud,  
 What merry groups of vacant faces crowd ;  
 These hail his coming—these his meal prepare,  
 And boast in all that cot no lurking care. 20

What, though the social circle be denied,  
 Even Sadness brightens at her own fire-side,  
 Loves, with fixed eye, to watch the fluttering blaze,  
 While musing Memory dwells on former days ;  
 Or Hope, blest spirit ! smiles—and still forgiven,  
 Forgets the passport, while she points to Heaven.  
 Then heap the fire—shut out the biting air,  
 And from its station wheel the easy chair :  
 Thus fenced and warm, in silent fit, 'tis sweet  
 To hear without the bitter tempest beat 30  
 All, all alone—to sit, and muse, and sigh,  
 The pensive tenant of obscurity.

\* \* \*

## IX

### ODE TO THE MOON

#### I

MILD orb who floatest through the realm of night,  
 A pathless wanderer o'er a lonely wild,  
 Welcome to me thy soft and pensive light,  
 Which oft in childhood my lone thoughts beguiled.  
 Now doubly dear as o'er my silent seat,  
 Nocturnal study's still retreat,  
 It casts a mournful melancholy gleam,  
 And through my lofty casement weaves,  
 Dim through the vine's encircling leaves,  
 An intermingled beam. 10

These feverish dews that on my temples hang,  
This quivering lip, these eyes of dying flame :  
These the dread signs of many a secret pang,  
These are the meed of him who pants for fame !  
Pale Moon, from thoughts like these divert my soul :  
Lowly I kneel before thy shrine on high :  
My lamp expires ;—beneath thy mild control,  
These restless dreams are ever wont to fly.

Come, kindred mourner, in my breast,  
Soothe these discordant tones to rest, 20  
And breathe the soul of peace ;  
Mild visitor, I feel thee here,  
It is not pain that brings this tear,  
For thou hast bid it cease,  
Oh ! many a year has passed away,  
Since I beneath thy fairy ray,  
Attuned my infant reed ;  
When wilt thou, Time, those days restore,  
Those happy moments now no more,

\* \* \*

When on the lake's damp marge I lay, 30  
And mark'd the northern meteor's dance,  
Bland Hope and Fancy, ye were there  
To inspire my trance.  
Twin sisters, faintly now ye deign  
Your magic sweets on me to shed,  
In vain your powers are now essay'd  
To chase superior pain.

And art thou fled, thou welcome orb?  
 So swiftly pleasure flies;  
 So to mankind, in darkness lost, 40  
 The beam of ardour dies.  
 Wan Moon, thy nightly task is done,  
 And now, encurtain'd in the main,  
 Thou sinkest into rest;  
 But I, in vain, on thorny bed,  
 Shall woo the god of soft repose—

\* \* \*

## X

### THE CHRISTIAD

A DIVINE POEM

#### BOOK I

##### I

I SING the Cross!—Ye white-robed angel choirs,  
 Who know the chords of harmony to sweep,  
 Ye who o'er holy David's varying wires  
 Were wont of old your hovering watch to keep,  
 Oh, now descend! and with your harpings deep,  
 Pouring sublime the full symphonious stream  
 Of music, such as soothes the saint's last sleep  
 Awake my slumbering spirit from its dream,  
 And teach me how to exalt the high mysterious  
 theme.

## II

Mourn ! Salem, mourn ! low lies thine humbled  
state, 10

Thy glittering fanes are levell'd with the ground !  
Fallen is thy pride !—Thine halls are desolate !

Whereerst was heard the timbrel's sprightly sound,

And frolic pleasures tripp'd the nightly round,

There breeds the wild fox lonely,—and aghast,

Stands the mute pilgrim at the void profound,

Unbroke by noise, save when the hurrying blast

Sighs, like a spirit, deep along the cheerless waste.

## III

It is for this, proud Solyma ! thy towers

Lie crumbling in the dust ; for this forlorn 20

Thy genius wails along thy desert bowers,

While stern Destruction laughs, as if in scorn,

That thou didst dare insult God's eldest born ;

And, with most bitter persecuting ire,

Pursued his footsteps till the last day-dawn

Rose on his fortunes—and thou saw'st the fire

That came to light the world, in one great flash  
expire.

## IV

Oh ! for a pencil dipp'd in living light,

To paint the agonies that Jesus bore !

Oh ! for the long-lost harp of Jesse's might, 30

To hymn the Saviour's praise from shore to shore ;

While seraph hosts the lofty pæan pour,

And Heaven enraptured lists the loud acclaim !  
 May a frail mortal dare the theme explore ?  
 May he to human ears his weak song frame ?  
 Oh ! may he dare to sing Messiah's glorious name ?

## V

Spirits of pity ! mild Crusaders, come !  
 Buoyant on clouds around your minstrel float,  
 And give him eloquence who else were dumb,  
 And raise to feeling and to fire his note ! 40  
 And thou, Urania ! who dost still devote  
 Thy nights and days to God's eternal shrine,  
 Whose mild eyes 'lumined what Isaiah wrote,  
 Throw o'er thy Bard that solemn stole of thine,  
 And clothe him for the fight with energy divine.

## VI

When from the temple's lofty summit prone,  
 Satan o'ercome, fell down ; and 'throned there,  
 The Son of God confest, in splendour shone ;  
 Swift as the glancing sunbeam cuts the air,  
 Mad with defeat, and yelling his despair, 50  
                   \*                  \*                  \*

Fled the stern king of Hell—and with the glare  
 Of gliding meteors, ominous and red,  
 Shot athwart the clouds that gather'd round his head.

## VII

Right o'er the Euxine, and that gulf which late  
 The rude Massagetæ adored, he bent  
 His northering course, while round, in dusky state,  
 The assembling fiends their summon'd troops  
 augment ;

Clothed in dark mists, upon their way they went,  
While, as they pass'd to regions more severe,  
The Lapland sorcerer swell'd with loud lament 60  
The solitary gale, and, fill'd with fear,  
The howling dogs bespoke unholy spirits near.

## VIII

Where the North Pole, in moody solitude,  
Spreads her huge tracks and frozen wastes around,  
There ice-rocks piled aloft, in order rude,  
Form a gigantic hall, where never sound  
Startled dull Silence' ear, save when profound  
The smoke-frost mutter'd : there drear Cold for aye  
Thrones him,—and, fix'd on his primeval mound,  
Ruin, the giant, sits ; while stern Dismay 70  
Stalks like some woe-struck man along the desert  
way

## IX

In that drear spot, grim Desolation's lair,  
No sweet remain of life encheers the sight ;  
The dancing heart's blood in an instant there  
Would freeze to marble.—Mingling day and night  
(Sweet interchange, which makes our labours  
light,)  
Are there unknown ; while in the summer skies  
The sun rolls ceaseless round his heavenly height,  
Nor ever sets till from the scene he flies,  
And leaves the long bleak night of half the year  
to rise. 80

## X

'Twas there, yet shuddering from the burning lake,  
 Satan had fix'd their next consistory,  
 When parting last he fondly hoped to shake  
 Messiah's constancy,—and thus to free  
 The powers of darkness from the dread decree  
 Of bondage brought by him, and circumvent  
 The unerring ways of Him whose eye can see  
 The womb of Time, and, in its embryo pent,  
 Discern the colours clear of every dark event.

## XI

Here the stern monarch stay'd his rapid flight, 90  
 And his thick host, as with a jetty pall,  
 Hovering obscured the north star's peaceful light,  
 Waiting on wing their haughty chieftain's call.  
 He, meanwhile, downward, with a sullen fall,  
 Dropt on the echoing ice. Instant the sound  
 Of their broad vans was hush'd, and o'er the  
 , hall,  
 Vast and obscure, the gloomy cohorts bound,  
 Till, wedged in ranks, the seat of Satan they  
 surround.

## XII

High on a solium of the solid wave,  
 Prankt with rude shapes by the fantastic frost, 100  
 He stood in silence ;—now keen thoughts engrave  
 Dark figures on his front ; and, tempest-tost,

He fears to say that every hope is lost.  
 Meanwhile the multitude as death are mute :  
 So, ere the tempest on Malacca's coast,  
 Sweet Quiet, gently touching her soft lute,  
 Sings to the whispering waves the prelude to dispute.

## XIII

At length collected, o'er the dark Divan  
 The arch-fiend glanced, as by the Boreal blaze  
 Their downcast brows were seen, and thus began 110  
 His fierce harangue :—Spirits ! our better days  
 Are now elapsed ; Moloch and Belial's praise  
 Shall sound no more in groves by myriads trod.  
 Lo ! the light breaks !—The astonished nations  
 gaze !  
 For us is lifted high the avenging rod !  
 For, spirits, this is He,—this is the Son of God.

## XIV

What then !—shall Satan's spirit crouch to fear ?  
 Shall he who shook the pillars of God's reign  
 Drop from his unnerved arm the hostile spear ?  
 Madness ! The very thought would make me  
 fain 120  
 To tear the spanglets from yon gaudy plain,  
 And hurl them at their Maker !—Fix'd as fate  
 I am his Foe !—Yea, though his pride should  
 deign  
 To soothe mine ire with half his regal state,  
 Still would I burn with fixt, unalterable hate.

## XV

Now hear the issue of my curst emprise,  
 When from our last sad synod I took flight,  
 Buoy'd with false hopes, in some deep-laid disguise,  
 To tempt this vaunted Holy One to write  
 His own self-condemnation ; in the plight 130  
 Of aged man in the lone wilderness,  
 Gathering a few stray sticks, I met his sight,  
 And, leaning on my staff, seem'd much to guess  
 What cause could mortal bring to that forlorn recess.

## XVI

Then thus in homely guise I featly framed  
 My lowly speech :—' Good sir, what leads this way  
 Your wandering steps? must hapless chance be  
 blamed  
 That you so far from haunt of mortals stray?  
 Here have I dwelt for many a lingering day,  
 Nor trace of man have seen ; but how ! me-  
 thought 140  
 Thou wert the youth on whom God's holy ray  
 I saw descend in Jordan, when John taught  
 That he to fallen man the saving promise brought.'

## XVII

'I am that man,' said Jesus, 'I am He !  
 But truce to questions—Canst thou point my feet  
 To some low hut, if haply such there be  
 In this wild labyrinth, where I may meet

With homely greeting, and may sit and eat ;  
 For forty days I have tarried fasting here,  
 Hid in the dark glens of this lone retreat, 150  
 And now I hunger ; and my fainting ear  
 Longs much to greet the sound of fountains gushing  
 near.'

## XVIII

Then thus I answer'd wily :— ' If, indeed,  
 Son of our God thou be'st, what need to seek  
 For food from men ?—Lo ! on these flint stones feed,  
 Bid them be bread ! Open thy lips and speak,  
 And living rills from yon parch'd rock will break.'  
 Instant as I had spoke, his piercing eye  
 Fix'd on my face ;—the blood forsook my cheek,  
 I could not bear his gaze ;—my mask slipp'd  
 by ; 160  
 I would have shunn'd his look, but had not power  
 to fly.

## XIX

Then he rebuked me with the holy word—  
 Accurs'd sounds ! but now my native pride  
 Return'd, and by no foolish qualm deterr'd,  
 I bore him from the mountain's woody side,  
 Up to the summit, where extending wide  
 Kingdoms and cities, palaces and fanes,  
 Bright sparkling in the sunbeams, were descried,  
 And in gay dance, amid luxuriant plains,  
 Tripp'd to the jocund reed the emasculated  
 swains. 170

## XX

'Behold,' I cried, 'these glories ! scenes divine !  
 Thou whose sad prime in pining want decays,  
 And these, O rapture ! these shall all be thine,  
 If thou wilt give to me, not God, the praise.  
 Hath he not given to indigence thy days?  
 Is not thy portion peril here and pain?  
 Oh ! leave his temples, shun his wounding ways !  
 Seize the tiara ! these mean weeds disdain,  
 Kneel, kneel, thou man of woe, and peace and  
 splendour gain.'

## XXI

'Is it not written,' sternly he replied, 180  
 'Tempt not the Lord thy God !' Frowning he  
 spake,  
 And instant sounds, as of the ocean tide,  
 Rose, and the whirlwind from its prison brake,  
 And caught me up aloft, till in one flake,  
 The sidelong volley met my swift career,  
 And smote me earthward.—Jove himself might  
 quake  
 At such a fall ; my sinews crack'd, and near,  
 Obscure and dizzy sounds seem'd ringing in mine ear.

## XXII

Senseless and stunn'd I lay ; till, casting round  
 My half unconscious gaze, I saw the foe 190  
 Borne on a car of roses to the ground,  
 By volant angels ; and as sailing slow

He sunk, the hoary battlement below,  
 While on the tall spire slept the slant sun-beam,  
 Sweet on the enamour'd zephyr was the flow  
 Of heavenly instruments. Such strains oft seem,  
 On star-light hill, to soothe the Syrian shepherd's  
 dream.

## XXIII

I saw blaspheming. Hate renew'd my strength ;  
 I smote the ether with my iron wing,  
 And left the accursed scene.—Arrived at length 200  
 In these drear halls, to ye, my peers ! I bring  
 The tidings of defeat. Hell's haughty king  
 Thrice vanquish'd, baffled, smitten, and dismay'd !  
 O shame ! Is this the hero who could fling  
 Defiance at his Maker, while array'd,  
 High o'er the walls of light rebellion's banners  
 play'd !

## XXIV

Yet shall not Heaven's bland minions triumph  
 long ;  
 Hell yet shall have revenge.—O glorious sight,  
 Prophetic visions on my fancy throng,  
 I see wild Agony's lean finger write 210  
 Sad figures on his forehead !—Keenly bright  
 Revenge's flambeau burns ! Now in his eyes  
 Stand the hot tears,—immantled in the night,  
 Lo ! he retires to mourn !—I hear his cries !  
 He faints—he falls—and lo !—'tis true, ye powers,  
 he dies.

## XXV

Thus spake the chieftain,—and as if he view'd  
 The scene he pictured, with his foot advanced  
 And chest inflated, motionless he stood,  
 While under his uplifted shield he glanced,  
 With straining eye-ball fix'd, like one en-  
   tranced, 220  
 On viewless air ;—thither the dark platoon  
 Gazed wondering, nothing seen, save when there  
   danced  
 The northern flash, or fiend late fled from noon,  
 Darken'd the disk of the descending moon.

## XXVI

Silence crept stilly through the ranks.—The breeze  
 Spake most distinctly. As the sailor stands,  
 When all the midnight gasping from the seas  
   Break boding sobs, and to his sight expands  
   High on the shrouds the spirit that commands  
 The ocean-farer's life ; so stiff—so sear 230  
   Stood each dark power ;—while through their  
   numerous bands  
 Beat not one heart, and mingling hope and fear  
 Now told them all was lost, now bade revenge appear.

## XXVII

One there was there, whose loud defying tongue  
 Nor hope nor fear had silenced, but the swell  
 Of over-boiling malice. Utterance long  
 His passion mock'd, and long he stroved to tell

His labouring ire ; still syllable none fell  
 From his pale quivering lip, but died away  
 For very fury ; from each hollow cell 240  
 Half sprang his eyes, that cast a flamy ray,  
 And \* \* \*

## XXVIII

‘ This comes,’ at length burst from the furious chief,  
 ‘ This comes of distant counsels ! Here behold  
 The fruits of wily cunning ! the relief  
 Which coward policy would fain unfold,  
 To soothe the powers that warr’d with Heaven  
 of old !  
 O wise ! O potent ! O sagacious snare !  
 And lo ! our prince—the mighty and the bold,  
 There stands he, spell-struck, gaping at the air, 250  
 While Heaven subverts his reign, and plants her  
 standard there.’

## XXIX

Here, as recovered, Satan fixed his eye  
 Full on the speaker ; dark it was and stern ;  
 He wrapt his black vest round him gloomily,  
 And stood like one whom weightiest thoughts  
 concern.  
 Him Moloch mark’d, and strove again to turn  
 His soul to rage. ‘ Behold, behold,’ he cried,  
 ‘ The lord of Hell, who bade these legions spurn  
 Almighty rule—behold he lays aside  
 The spear of just revenge, and shrinks, by man  
 defied.’ 260

## XXX

Thus ended Moloch, and his [burning] tongue  
 Hung quivering, as if [mad] to quench its heat  
 In slaughter. So, his native wilds among,  
 The famished tiger pants, when, near his seat,  
 Press'd on the sands, he marks the traveller's feet.  
 Instant low murmurs rose, and many a sword  
 Had from its scabbard sprung; but toward the  
 seat  
 Of the arch-fiend all turn'd with one accord,  
 As loud he thus harangued the sanguinary horde.

\* \* \*

Ye powers of Hell, I am no coward. I proved  
 this of old: who led your forces against the armies  
 of Jehovah? Who coped with Ithuriel and the  
 thunders of the Almighty? Who, when stunned  
 and confused ye lay on the burning lake, who first  
 awoke, and collected your scattered powers? Lastly,  
 who led you across the unfathomable abyss to this  
 delightful world, and established that reign here  
 which now totters to its base? How, therefore,  
 dares yon treacherous fiend to cast a strain on Satan's  
 bravery? he who preys only on the defenceless—who  
 sucks the blood of infants, and delights only in acts  
 of ignoble cruelty and unequal contention. Away  
 with the boaster who never joins in action, but, like  
 a cormorant, hovers over the field, to feed upon the  
 wounded, and overwhelm the dying. True bravery  
 is as remote from rashness as from hesitation; let  
 us counsel coolly, but let us execute our counselled

purposes determinately. In power we have learned, by that experiment which lost us Heaven, that we are inferior to the Thunder-bearer:—In subtlety—in subtlety alone we are his equals. Open war is impossible.

\*            \*            \*

Thus we shall pierce our Conqueror, through the  
race 270

Which as himself he loves ; thus if we fall,  
We fall not with the anguish, the disgrace  
Of falling unrevenged. The stirring call  
Of vengeance rings<sup>1</sup> within me ! Warriors all,  
The word is vengeance, and the spur despair.  
Away with coward wiles !—Death's coal-black  
pall

Be now our standard !—Be our torch the glare  
Of cities fired ! our fifes, the shrieks that fill  
the air !

Ilhim answering rose Mecashpim, who of old,  
Far in the silence of Chaldea's groves, 280  
Was worshipp'd, God of Fire, with charms untold  
And mystery. His wandering spirit roves,  
Now vainly searching for the flame it loves,  
And sits and mourns like some white-robed sire,  
Where stood his temple, and where fragrant  
cloves

And cinnamon upheap'd the sacred pyre,  
And nightly magi watch'd the everlasting fire.

<sup>1</sup> The Southey volume misprints ' wrings.' Ed.

He waved his robe of flame, he cross'd his breast,  
 And sighing—his papyrus scarf survey'd,  
 Woven with dark characters ; then thus address'd 290  
 The troubled council.

## I

Thus far have I pursued my solemn theme  
 With self-rewarding toil, thus far have sung  
 Of godlike deeds, far loftier than beseem  
 The lyre which I in early days have strung ;  
 And now my spirits faint, and I have hung  
 The shell, that solaced me in saddest hour,  
 On the dark cypress ! and the strings which rung  
 With Jesus' praise, their harpings now are o'er,  
 Or, when the breeze comes by, moan, and are heard  
 no more. 300

And must the harp of Judah sleep again ?  
 Shall I no more reanimate the lay ?  
 Oh ! thou who visitest the sons of men,  
 Thou who dost listen when the humble pray  
 One little space prolong my mournful day !  
 One little lapse suspend thy last decree !  
 I am a youthful traveller in the way,  
 And this slight boon would consecrate to thee,  
 Ere I with Death shake hands, and smile that I am  
 free.

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LETTERS AND PROSE  
FRAGMENTS



## LETTERS AND PROSE FRAGMENTS

### TO HIS BROTHER NEVILLE

Nottingham, September, 1799

Dear Brother,

IN consequence of your repeated solicitations, I now sit down to write to you, although I never received an answer to the last letter which I wrote, nearly six months ago ; but, as I never heard you mention it in any of my mother's letters, I am induced to think it has miscarried, or been mislaid in your office.

It is now nearly four months since I entered into Mr Coldham's office ; and it is with pleasure I can assure you, that I never yet found anything disagreeable, but, on the contrary, everything I do seems a pleasure to me, and for a very obvious reason—it is a business which I like—a business which I chose before all others ; and I have two good-tempered, easy masters, but who will, nevertheless, see that their business is done in a neat and proper manner. The study of the law is well known to be a dry, difficult task, and requires a

comprehensive, good understanding; and I hope you will allow me (without charging me with egotism) to have a tolerable one; and I trust with perseverance, and a very large law library to refer to, I shall be able to accomplish the study of so much of the laws of England, and our system of jurisprudence, in less than five years, as to enable me to be a country attorney; and then, as I shall have two more years to serve, I hope I shall attain so much knowledge in all parts of the law, as to enable me, with a little study at the inns of court, to hold an argument on the nice points in the law with the best attorney in the kingdom. A man that understands the law is sure to have business; and in case I have no thoughts, in case that is, that I do not aspire to hold the honourable place of a barrister, I shall feel sure of gaining a genteel livelihood at the business to which I am articulated.

I attend at the office at eight in the morning, and leave at eight in the evening; then attend my Latin until nine, which, you may be sure, is pretty close confinement.

Mr Coldham is clerk to the commercial commissioners, which has occasioned us a deal of extraordinary work. I worked all Sunday, and until twelve o'clock on Saturday night, when they were hurried to give in the certificates to the bank. We had also a very troublesome cause last assizes, *The Corporation versus Gee*, which we (the attorneys for the corporation) lost. It was really a very fatiguing day (I mean the day on which it was

tried). I never got anything to eat, from five in the afternoon the preceding day, until twelve the next night, when the trial ended.

## TO HIS BROTHER NEVILLE

Nottingham, 26th June, 1800

Dear Brother,

\*

\*

\*

MY mother has allowed me a good deal lately for books, and I have a large *assortment* (a retailer's phrase). But I hope you do not suppose they consist of novels—no—I have made a firm resolution never to spend above one hour at this amusement. Though I have been obliged to enter into this resolution in consequence of a vitiated taste acquired by reading romances, I do not intend to banish them entirely from my desk. After long and fatiguing researches in Blackstone or Coke, when the mind becomes weak, through intense application, *Tom Jones*, or *Robinson Crusoe*, will afford a pleasing and necessary relaxation.

Apropos — now we are speaking of *Robinson Crusoe*, I shall observe, that is allowed to be the best novel for youth in the English language. De Foe, the author, was a singular character; but as I make no doubt you have read his life, I will not trouble you with any further remarks.

The books which I now read with attention, are Blackstone, Knox's *Essays*, Plutarch, Chesterfield's

*Letters*, four large volumes, Virgil, Homer, and Cicero, and several others. Blackstone and Knox, Virgil and Cicero, I have got; the others I read out of Mr Coldham's library. I have finished Rollin's *Ancient History*, Blair's *Lectures*, Smith's *Wealth of Nations*, Hume's *England*, and *British Nepsos*, lately. When I have read Knox I will send it you, and recommend it to your attentive perusal; it is a most *excellent* work. I also read now the *British Classics*, the common edition of which I now take in; it comes every fortnight; I dare say you have seen it; it is Cooke's edition. I would recommend you also to read these; I will send them to you. I have got *The Citizen of the World*, Idler, Goldsmith's *Essays*, and part of *The Rambler*. I will send you soon the fourth number of *The Monthly Preceptor*. I am noticed as worthy of commendation, and as affording an encouraging prospect of future excellence.—You will laugh. I have also turned poet, and have translated an Ode of Horace into English *verse*, also for *The Monthly Preceptor*, but, unfortunately, when I sent it, I forgot the title, so it wont be noticed.

I do not forsake the flowery paths of poesy, for that is my chief delight; I read the best poets. Mr Coldham has got Johnson's complete set, with their lives; these of course I read.

With a little drudgery, I read Italian—Have got some good Italian works, as Pastor Fido, &c., &c. I taught myself, and have got a grammar.

I must now beg leave to return you my sincere

thanks for your kind present. I like *La Bruyere* the *Less* very much; I have read the original *La Bruyere*: I think him like Rouchefoucault. Madame de Genlis is a very able woman.

\* \* \*

But I must now attempt to excuse my neglect in not writing to you. First, I have been very busy with these essays and poems for *The Monthly Preceptor*. Second, I was rather angry at your last letter—I can bear anything but a sneer, and it was one continued grin from beginning to end, as were all the notices you made of me in my mother's letters, and I could not, nor can I now, brook it. I could say much more, but it is very late, and must beg leave to wish you good night.

I am, dear brother,

Your affectionate friend,

H. K. WHITE

P. S. You may expect a regular correspondence from me in future, but no sneers; and shall be very obliged by a long letter.

## TO HIS BROTHER NEVILLE

Nottingham, 25th June, 1800

Dear Neville,

\* \* \*

You are inclined to flatter me when you compare my application with yours; in truth, I am not half

so assiduous as you, and I am conscious I waste a deal of time unwittingly. But, in reading, I am upon the continual search for improvement : I thirst after knowledge, and though my disposition is naturally idle, I conquer it when reading a useful book. The plan which I pursued, in order to subdue my disinclination to dry books, was this, to begin *attentively* to peruse it, and continue thus one hour every day ; the book insensibly, by this means, becomes pleasing to you ; and even when reading Blackstone's *Commentaries*, which are very dry, I lay down the book with regret.

With regard to *The Monthly Preceptor*, I certainly shall be agreeable to your taking it in, as my only objection was the extreme impatience which I feel to see whether my essays have been successful ; but this may be obviated by your speedy perusal, and not neglecting to forward it. But you must have the goodness not to begin till August, as my bookseller cannot stop it this month.

\* \* \*

I had a ticket given me to the boxes, on Monday night, for the benefit of Campbell, from Drury-Lane, and there was such a riot as never was experienced here before. He is a democrat, and the soldiers planned a riot in conjunction with the *mob*. We heard the shouting of the rabble in the street before the *play* was over ; the moment the curtain dropped, an officer went into the front box, and gave the word of command ; immediately about sixty troopers started up, and six trumpeters in the pit played 'God save

the King'. The noise was astonishing. The officers in the boxes then drew their swords; and at another signal the privates in the pit drew their bludgeons, which they had hitherto concealed, and attacked all indiscriminately, that had not an uniform: the officers did the same with their swords, and the house was one continued scene of confusion: one pistol was fired, and the ladies were fainting in the lobby. The outer doors were shut to keep out the mob, and the people jumped on the stage as a last resource. One of these noble officers, seeing one man stand in the pit with his hat on, jumped over the division, and cut him with his sword, which the man instantly wrenched from him, and broke, whilst the officer sneaked back in disgrace. They then formed a troop, and having emptied the play-house, they scoured the streets with their swords, and returned home victorious. The players are, in consequence, dismissed; and we have informations in our office against the officers.

\* \* \*

## TO HIS BROTHER NEVILLE

Nottingham, 11th April, 1801

Dear Neville,

ON opening yours, I was highly pleased to find two and a half sheets of paper, and nothing could exceed my joy at so apparently long a letter, but upon finding it consisted of sides filled after the rate of five words in a line, and nine lines in a page,

I could not conceal my chagrin; and I am sure I may very modestly say, that one of my ordinary pages contains three of yours: if you knew half the pleasure I feel in your correspondence, I am confident you would lengthen your letters. You tantalize me with the hopes of a prolific harvest, and I find, alas! a thin crop, whose goodness only makes me lament its scantiness.

\* \* \*

I had almost forgot to tell you, that I have obtained the first prize (of a pair of Adams's twelve-inch globes, value three guineas) in the first class of *The Monthly Preceptor*. The subject was an imaginary tour from London to Edinburgh. It is printed consequently, and shall send it to you the very first opportunity. The proposals stated, that the essay was not to exceed three pages when printed—mine takes seven; therefore I am astonished they gave me the first prize. There was an extraordinary number of candidates; and they said they never had a greater number of excellent ones, and they wished they could have given thirty prizes. You will find it (in a letter) addressed to N——, meaning yourself.

\* \* \*

Warton is a poet from whom I have derived the most exquisite pleasure and gratification. He abounds in sublimity and loftiness of thought, as well as expression. His *Pleasures of Melancholy* is truly a sublime poem. The following passage I particularly admire:

Nor undelightful in the solemn noon  
 Of night, where, haply wakeful from my couch  
 I start, lo, all is motionless around !  
 Roars not the rushing wind ; the sons of men,  
 And every beast, in mute oblivion lie :  
 All Nature's hush'd in silence, and in sleep.  
 Oh, then, how fearful is it to reflect,  
 That through the still globe's awful solitude  
 No being wakes but me.

How affecting are the latter lines ! it is impossible to withstand the emotions which rise on its perusal, and I envy not that man his insensibility who can read them with apathy. Many of the pieces of the Bible are written in this sublime manner : one psalm, think the 18th, is a perfect master-piece, and has been imitated by many poets. Compare these, or the above quoted from Warton, with the finest piece in Pope, and then judge of the rank which he holds as a poet. Another instance of the sublime in poetry I will give you, from Akenside's admirable *Pleasures of Imagination*, where, speaking of the soul he says, she

Rides on the vollied lightning through the heavens,  
 And yoked with whirlwinds, and the northern blast,  
 Sweeps the long tract of day.

Many of these instances of sublimity will occur to you in Thomson.

James begs leave to present you with Bloomfield's *Farmer's Boy*. Bloomfield has no grandeur or height ; he is a pastoral poet, and the simply sweet

is what you are to expect from him ; nevertheless, his descriptions are sometimes little inferior to Thomson.

\* \* \*

How pleased should I be, Neville, to have you with us at Nottingham ! Our fire-side would be delightful. I should profit by your sentiments and experience, and you possibly might gain a little from my small bookish knowledge. But I am afraid that time will never come ; your time of apprenticeship is nearly expired, and, in all appearance, the small residue that yet remains will be passed in hated London. When you are emancipated, you will have to mix in the bustle of the world, in all probability, also, far from home ; so that when we have just learned how happy we might mutually make ourselves, we find scarcely a shadow of a probability of ever having the opportunity. Well, well, it is in vain to resist the immutable decrees of fate.

\* \* \*

## TO HIS BROTHER NEVILLE

Nottingham, April, 1801

Dear Neville,

As I know you will participate with me in the pleasure I receive from literary distinctions, I hasten to inform you, that my poetical Essay on Gratitude is printed in this month's *Preceptor* ; that my remarks on Warton are promised insertion in the next month's *Mirror* ; and that my Essay on Truth is printed in

the present (April) *Monthly Visitor*. *The Preceptor* I shall not be able to send you until the end of this month. *The Visitor* you will herewith receive. The next month's *Mirror* I shall consequently buy. I wish it were not quite so expensive, as I think it a very good work. Benjamin Thomson, Capel Lofft, Esq., Robert Bloomfield, Thomas Dermody, Mr Gilchrist, under the signature of Octavius, Mrs Blore, a noted female writer, under the signature of Q. Z., are correspondents; and the editors are not only men of genius and taste, but of the greatest respectability. As I shall now be a regular contributor to this work, and as I think it contains much good matter, I have half an inclination to take it in, more especially as you have got the prior volumes: but in the present state of my finances it will not be prudent, unless you accede to a proposal, which, I think, will be gratifying to yourself.—It is, to take it in conjunction with me; by which means we shall both have the same enjoyment of it, with half the expense. It is of little consequence who takes them, only he must be expeditious in reading them. If you have any the least objection to this scheme, do not suppress it through any regard to punctilio. I have only proposed it, and it is not *very* material whether you concur or not; only exercise your own discretion.

You say, (speaking of a passage concerning you in my last), 'this is compliment sufficient; the rest must be flattery'.—Do you seriously, Neville, think me capable of flattery?

As you well know I am a carping, critical little

dog, you will not be surprised at my observing that there is one figure in your last that savours rather of the ludicrous, when you talk of a ‘butterfly *hopping* from book to book’.

As to the something that I am to find out, that is a perpetual bar to your progress in knowledge, &c., I am inclined to think, Doctor, it is merely *conceit*. You fancy that you cannot write a letter—you dread its idea; you conceive that a work of four volumes would require the labours of a life to read through; you persuade yourself that you cannot retain what you read, and in despair do not attempt to conquer these visionary impediments. Confidence, Neville, in one’s own abilities, is a sure forerunner (in similar circumstances with the present) of success. As an illustration of this, I beg leave to adduce the example of Pope, who had so high a sense, in his youth, or rather *in his infancy*, of his own capacity, that there was nothing of which, when once set about, he did not think himself capable; and, as Dr Johnson has observed, the natural consequence of this minute perception of his own powers, was his arriving at as high a pitch of perfection as it was possible for a man with his few natural endowments to attain.

\* \* \*

When you wish to read Johnson’s *Lives of the Poets*, send for them: I have lately purchased them. I have now a large library. My mother allows me ten pounds per annum for clothes. I always dress in a respectable and even in a genteel manner, yet I can make much less than this sum suffice. My

father generally gives me one coat in a year, and I make two serve. I then receive one guinea per annum for keeping my mother's books; one guinea per annum pocket-money: and by other means I gain, perhaps, two guineas more per annum: so that I have been able to buy pretty many; and when you come home, you will find me in my study surrounded with books and papers. I am a perfect garreteer: great part of my library, however, consists of professional books. Have you read Burke *On the Sublime*? Knox's *Winter Evening*?—Can lend them to you, if you have not.

Really, Neville, were you fully sensible how much my time is occupied, principally about my profession, as a primary concern, and in the hours necessarily set apart to relaxation, on polite literature, to which, as a hobby-horse, I am very desirous of paying some attention, you would not be angry at my delay in writing, or my short letters. It is always with joy that I devote a leisure hour to you, as it affords you gratification; and rest assured, that I always participate in your pleasure, and poignantly feel every adverse incident which causes you pain.

Permit me, however, again to observe, that one of my sheets is equal to two of yours; and I cannot but consider this is a kind of fallacious deception, for you always think that your letters contain so much more than mine because they occupy more room. If you were to count the words, the difference would not be so great. You must also take in account the unsealed communications to periodical works, which

I now reckon a part of my letter ; and therefore you must excuse my concluding on the first sheet, by assuring you that I still remain

Your friend and brother,

H. K. WHITE

P. S. A postscript is a natural appendage to a letter.—I only have to say, that positively you shall receive a six or eight sheet letter, and that written legibly, ere long.

## TO MR BOOTH

Nottingham, 12th August, 1801

Dear Sir,

I MUST beg leave to apologize for not having returned my sincere acknowledgments to yourself and Mrs Booth, for your very acceptable presents, at an earlier period. I now, however, acquit myself of the duty ; and assure you, that from both of the works I have received much gratification and edification, but more particularly from one on the Trinity<sup>1</sup>, a production which displays much erudition, and a very laudable zeal for the true interests of religion. Religious polemics, indeed, have seldom formed a part of my studies ; though, whenever I happened accidentally to turn my thoughts to the subject of

<sup>1</sup> Jones on the Trinity.

the Protestant doctrine of the Godhead, and compared it with Arian and Socinian, many doubts interfered, and I even began to think that the more nicely the subject was investigated, the more perplexed it would appear, and was on the point of forming a resolution to go to heaven in my own way, without meddling or involving myself in the inextricable labyrinth of controversial dispute, when I received and perused this excellent treatise, which finally cleared up the mists which my ignorance had conjured around me, and clearly pointed out the real truth. The intention of the author precluded the possibility of his employing the ornaments and graces of composition in his work ; for as it was meant for all ranks, it must be suited to all capacities ; but the arguments are drawn up and arranged in so forcible and perspicuous a manner, and are written so plainly, yet pleasingly, that I was absolutely charmed with them.

The *Evangelical Clergyman* is a very smart piece ; the author possesses a considerable portion of sarcastic spirit, and no little acrimony, perhaps not consistent with the Christian meekness which he wishes to inculcate. I consider, however, that London would not have many graces, or attractions, if despoiled of all the amusements to which, in one part of his pamphlet, he objects. In theory, the destruction of these vicious recreations is very fine : but in practice, I am afraid he would find it quite different. \* \* \* The other parts of this piece are very just, and such as every person must subscribe to. Clergymen, in general, are not what they ought to

be; and I think Mr —— has pointed out their duties very accurately. But I am afraid I shall be deemed impertinent and tiresome, in troubling you with ill-timed and obtrusive opinions, and beg leave, therefore, to conclude, with respects to yourself and Mrs Booth, by assuring you that I am, according to custom from time immemorial, and in due form,

Dear sir, your obliged humble servant,

HENRY KIRKE WHITE

### TO HIS BROTHER NEVILLE

Nottingham, 10th February, 1803

Dear Neville,

\* \* \*

Now with regard to the subscription, I shall certainly agree to this mode of publication, and I am very much obliged to you for what you say regarding it. But we must wait (except among your private friends) until we get Lady Derby's answer, and *Proposals* are printed. I think we shall readily raise 350, though Nottingham is the worst place imaginable for anything of that kind. Even envy will interfere. I shall send proposals to Chesterfield, to my uncle; to Sheffield, to Miss Gales's (book-sellers), whom I saw at Chesterfield, and who have lately sent me a pressing invitation to S——, accompanied with a desire of Montgomery (the Poet Paul Positive) to see me; to Newark—Allen and

Wright, my friends there (the latter a bookseller); and I think if they were stitched up with all the *Monthly Mirrors*, it would promote the subscription. You are not to take any money; that would be absolute begging: the subscribers put down their names, and pay the bookseller of whom they get the copy.

\* \* \*

## TO HIS BROTHER NEVILLE

Nottingham, 10th March, 1803

Dear Neville,

I AM cured of patronage hunting; I will not expose myself to any more similar mortifications, but shall thank you to send the manuscripts to Mr Hill, with a note, stating that I had written to the Duchess, and receiving no answer, you had called, and been informed by a servant, that in all probability she never read the letter, as she desired to know *what the book was left there for*; that you had, in consequence, come away with the manuscripts, under a conviction that your brother would give Her Grace no further trouble. State also, that you have received a letter from me, expressing a desire that the publication might be proceeded on without any further solicitation or delay.

A name of eminence was, nevertheless, a most desirable thing to me in Nottingham, as it would

attach more respectability to the subscription ; but I see all further efforts will only be productive of procrastination.

\* \* \*

I think you may as well begin to obtain subscribers amongst friends now, though the proposals may not be issued at present.

I have got twenty-three, without making the affair public at all, among my immediate acquaintance : and mind, I neither solicit nor draw the conversation to the subject, but a rumour has got abroad, and has been received more favourably than I expected.

\* \* \*

## TO HIS BROTHER NEVILLE

Nottingham, 2nd May, 1803

Dear Neville,

I HAVE just gained a piece of intelligence which much vexes me. Robinson, the bookseller, knows that I have written to the Duchess of Devonshire, and he took the liberty (certainly an unwarrantable one) to mention it to \* \* \*, whose \* \* \* was inscribed to Her Grace. Mr \* \* \* said, that unless I had got a friend to deliver the poems, *personally*, into the hands of Her Grace, it was a hundred to one that they ever reached her ; that the porter at the lodge burns scores of letters and packets a day, and particularly all letters by the twopenny post are

consigned to the fire. The rest, if they are not particularly excepted, as inscribed with a *pass name* on the back, are thrown into a closet, to be reclaimed at leisure. He said, the way he proceeded was this : He left his card at her door, and the next day called, and was admitted. Her Grace then gave him permission, with this proviso, that the dedication was as short as possible, and contained no compliments, as the Duke had taken offence at some such compliments.

Now, as my letter was delivered by you at the door, I have scarcely a doubt that it is classed with the penny-post letters, and burnt. If my manuscripts are destroyed, I am ruined, but I hope it is otherwise. However, I think you had better call immediately, and ask for a parcel of Mr H. White, of Nottingham. They will, of course, say they have no such parcel ; and then, perhaps, you may have an opportunity of asking whether a packet, left in the manner you left mine, had any probability of reaching the Duchess. If you obtain no satisfaction, there remains no way of re-obtaining my volume but this (and I fear you will never agree to put in execution) ; to leave a card, with your name inscribed (Mr J. N. White), and call the next day. If you are admitted, you will state to Her Grace the purport of your errand, ask for a volume of poems in manuscript, sent by your brother a fortnight ago, with a letter (say from Nottingham, as a reason why I do not wait on her), requesting permission of dedication to her ; and that as you found Her Grace had not received them, you had

taken the liberty, after many inquiries at her door, to request to see her in person.

I hope your diffidence will not be put to this test ; I hope you will get the poems without trouble : as for begging patronage, I am tired to the soul of it, and shall give it up.

\* \* \*

## TO HIS BROTHER NEVILLE

Nottingham, ——— 1803

Dear Neville,

I WRITE you, with intelligence of a very important nature. You some time ago had an intimation of my wish to enter the church, in case my deafness was not removed.—About a week ago I became acquainted with the Rev. ———, late of St John's College, Cambridge, and in consequence of what he has said, I have finally determined to enter myself of Trinity College, Cambridge, with the approbation of all my friends.

Mr ——— says that it is a shame to keep me away from the university, and that circumstances are of no importance. He says, that if I am entered of Trinity, where they are all *select men*, I must *necessarily*, with my abilities, arrive at preferment. He says he will be answerable that the first year I shall obtain a scholarship, or an exhibition adequate to my support. That by the time I have been of

five years' standing, I shall of course become a Fellow (200*l.* a-year); that with the Fellowship I may hold a Professorship, (500*l.* per annum), and a living or curacy, until better preferments occur. He says, that there is *no uncertainty* in the church to a truly pious man, and a man of abilities and eloquence. That those who are unprovided for, are generally men who, having no interest, are idle drones, or dissolute debauchees, and therefore ought not to expect advancement. That a poet, in particular, has the means of patronage in his pen: and that, in one word, no young man can enter the church (except he be of family) with better prospects than myself. On the other hand, Mr Enfield has himself often observed, that my deafness will be an insuperable obstacle to me as an attorney, and has said how unfortunate a thing it was for me not to have known of the growing defect, in my organs of hearing, before I articulated myself. Under these circumstances, I conceive I should be culpable did I let go so good an opportunity as now occurs. Mr — will write to all his university friends, and he says there is so much liberality there, that they will never let a young man of talents be turned from his studies by want of cash.

Yesterday I spoke to Mr Enfield, and he, with unexampled generosity, said that he saw clearly what an advantageous thing it would be for me; that I must be sensible what a great loss he and Mr Coldham would suffer; but that he was certain neither he, nor Mr C——, could oppose themselves

to anything which was so much to my advantage. When Mr C—— returns from London, the matter will be settled with my mother.

All my mother's friends seem to think this an excellent thing for me, and will do all in their power to forward me.

Now we come to a very important part of the business—*the means*. I shall go with my friend Robert, in the capacity of *Sizar*, to whom the expense is not more than 60*l.* per annum. Towards this sum my mother will contribute 20*l.*, being what she allows me now for clothes; (by this means she will save my board;) and, for the residue, I must trust to getting a Scholarship, or Chapel Clerk's post. But, in order to make this residue *certain*, I shall, at the expiration of twelve months, publish a second volume of poems by subscription.

\* \* \*

My friend, Mr —— says, that so far as his means will go, I shall never ask assistance in vain. He has but a small income, though of great family. He has just lost two rectories by scruples of conscience, and now preaches at —— for 80*l.* a-year. The following letter he put into my hand as I was leaving him, after having breakfasted with him yesterday. He put it into my hand, and requested me not to read it until I got home. It is a breach of trust letting you see it, but I wish you to know his character.

‘My dear Sir,

‘I sincerely wish I had it in my power to render you any essential service, to facilitate your passing through College: believe me, I have the *will*, but not the *means*. Should the enclosed be of any service, either to purchase books, or for other pocket expenses, I request your acceptance of it; but must entreat you not to notice it, *either to myself*, or any living creature. I pray God that you may employ those talents that he has given you to his glory, and to the benefit of his people. I have great fears for you; the temptations of College are great.

Believe me very sincerely yours,

\* \* \*

The enclosure was 2*l.* 2*s.* I could not refuse what was so delicately offered, though I was sorry to take it: he is truly an amiable character.

\* \* \*

## TO HIS BROTHER NEVILLE

Nottingham, ——— 1803

Dear Neville,

YOU may conceive with what emotions I read your brotherly letter; I feel a very great degree of aversion to burthening my family any more than I have done, and now do; but an offer so delicate and affectionate I cannot refuse, and if I should need pecuniary

assistance, which I am in hopes I shall not, *at least after the first year*, I shall without a moment's hesitation apply to my brother Neville.

My college schemes yet remain in a considerable degree of uncertainty ; I am very uneasy thereabouts. I have not heard from Cambridge yet, and it is very doubtful whether there be a vacant Sizarship in Trinity : so that I can write you no further information on this head.

\* \* \*

I suppose you have seen my review in this month's *Mirror*, and that I need not comment upon it ; such a review I neither expected, nor in fact deserve.

I shall not send up the *Mirror*, this month, on this account, as it is policy to keep it ; and you have, no doubt, received one from Mr Hill.

The errors in the Greek quotation I perceived the moment I got down the first copies, and altered them, in most, with the pen ; they are very unlucky ; I have sent up the copies for the reviews myself, in order that I might make the correction in them.

I have got now to write letters to all the reviewers, and hope you will excuse my abrupt conclusion of this letter on that score.

I am, dear Neville, affectionately yours,

H. K. WHITE

I shall write to Mr Hill now the first thing ; I owe much to him.

TO MR B. MADDOCK

Nottingham, —————

My Dear Ben,

\*

\*

\*

AND now, my dear Ben, I must confess your letter gave me much pain; there is a tone of despondence in it which I must condemn, inasmuch as it is occasioned by circumstances which do not involve your own exertions, but which are utterly independent of yourself: if you do your duty, why lament that it is not *productive*? In whatever situation we may be placed, there is a duty we owe to God and religion: it is resignation;—nay, I may say, contentment. All things are in the hands of God; and shall we mortals (if we do not absolutely repine at his dispensations) be fretful under them? I do beseech you, my dear Ben, summon up the Christian within you, and steeled with holy fortitude go on your way rejoicing! There is a species of morbid sensibility to which I myself have often been a victim, which preys upon my heart, and, without giving birth to one actively useful or benevolent feeling, does but brood on selfish sorrows, and magnify its own misfortunes. The evils of such a sensibility, I pray to God you may never feel; but I would have you beware, for it grows on persons of a certain disposition before they are aware of it.

I am sorry my letter gave you pain, and I trust my suspicions were without foundation. Time, my dear

Ben, is the discoverer of hearts, and I feel a sweet confidence that he will knit ours yet more closely together.

I believe my lot in life is nearly fixed; a month will tell me whether I am to be a minister of Christ, in the established church, *or out*. One of the two, I am now finally resolved, if it please God, to be. I know my own unworthiness: I feel deeply that I am far from being that pure and undefiled temple of the Holy Ghost that a minister of the word of life ought to be, yet still I have an unaccountable hope that the Lord will sanctify my efforts, that he will purify me, and that I shall become his devoted servant.

I am at present under afflictions and contentions of spirit, heavier than I have yet ever experienced. I think, at times, I am mad, and destitute of religion. My pride is not yet subdued: the unfavourable review (in *The Monthly*) of my unhappy work, has cut deeper than you could have thought; not in a literary point of view, but as it affects my respectability. It represents me actually as a *beggar*, going about gathering money to put myself at College, when my book is worthless; and this with every appearance of candour. They have been sadly misinformed respecting me: this Review goes before me wherever I turn my steps; it haunts me incessantly, and I am persuaded it is an instrument in the hands of Satan to drive me to distraction. I *must* leave Nottingham. If the answer of the Elland Society be unfavourable, I purpose writing to the Marquis of Wellesley, to offer myself as a student at the academy he has instituted at Fort

William, in Bengal, and at the proper age to take orders there. The missionaries at that place have done wonders already, and I should, I hope, be a valuable labourer in the vineyard. If the Marquis take no notice of my application, or do not accede to my proposal, I shall place myself in some other way of making a meet preparation for the holy office, either in the Calvinistic Academy, or in one of the Scotch Universities, where I shall be able to live at scarcely any expense.

\* \* \*

TO: MR R. A—

Nottingham, 18th April, 1804

My Dear Robert,

I HAVE just received your letter. Most fervently do I return thanks to God for this providential opening ; it has breathed new animation into me, and my breast expands with the prospect of becoming the minister of Christ where I most desired it ; but where I almost feared all probability of success was nearly at an end. Indeed, I had begun to turn my thoughts to the dissenters, as people of whom I was destined, not by choice, but necessity, to become the pastor. Still, although I knew I should be happy anywhere, so that I were a profitable labourer in the vineyard, I did, by no means, feel that calm, that indescribable satisfaction which I do, when I look toward that church, which I

think, in the main, formed on the apostolic model, and from which I am decidedly of opinion there is no positive grounds for dissent. I return thanks to God for keeping me so long in suspense, for I know it has been beneficial to my soul, and I feel a considerable trust that the way is now about to be made clear, and that my doubts and fears on this head will, in due time, be removed.

Could I be admitted to St John's, I conclude, from what I have heard, that my provision would be adequate, not otherwise. From my mother I could depend on 15 or 20*l.* a-year if she live, toward college expenses, and I could spend the long vacation at home. The 20*l.* per annum from my brother would suffice for clothes, &c. ; so that if I could procure 20*l.* a-year more, as you seem to think I may, by the kindness of Mr Martyn, I conceive I might, with economy, be supported at College ; of this, however, you are the best judge.

You may conceive how much I feel obliged by Mr Martyn on this head, as well as to you, for your unwearying exertions. Truly, friends have risen up to me in quarters where I could not have expected them, and they have been raised, as it were, by the finger of God. I have reason, above all men, to be grateful to the Father of all mercies for his loving-kindness towards me ; surely no one can have had more experience of the fatherly concern with which God watches over, protects, and succours his chosen seed, than I have had ; and surely none could have

less expected such a manifestation of his grace, and none could have less merited its continuance.

\* \* \*

In pursuance of your injunction, I shall lay aside Grotius, and take up Cicero and Livy, or Tacitus. In Greek I must rest contented for the ensuing fourteen days with the Testament ; I shall then have conquered the Gospels, and, if things go on smoothly, the Acts. I shall then read Homer, and perhaps Plato's *Phædon*, which I lately picked up at a stall. My classical knowledge is very superficial ; it has very little depth or solidity ; but I have really so small a portion of leisure, that I wonder at the progress I do make. I believe I must copy the old divines, in rising at four o'clock : for my evenings are so much taken up with visiting the sick, and with young men who come for religious conversation, that there is but little time for study.

\* \* \*

TO MR B. MADDOCK

Nottingham, 24th April, 1804

My Dear Ben,

TRULY I am grieved, that whenever I undertake to be the messenger of glad tidings, I should frustrate my own design, and communicate to my good intelligence a taint of sadness, as it were by contagion. Most joyfully did I sit down to write my last, as I knew

M

I had wherewith to administer comfort to you ; and yet, after all, I find that, by gloomy anticipations, I have converted my balsam into bitterness, and I have by no means imparted that unmixed pleasure which I wished to do.

Forebodings and dismal calculations are, I am convinced, very useless, and I think very pernicious speculations — ‘Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof.’—And yet how apt are we, when imminent trials molest us, to increase the burden by melancholy ruminations on future evils !—evils which exist only in our own imaginations—and which, should they be realized, will certainly arrive in time to oppress us sufficiently without our adding to their existence by previous apprehension, and thus voluntarily incurring the penalty of misfortunes yet in perspective, and trials yet unborn. Let us guard, then, I beseech you, against these ungrateful divinations into the womb of futurity—we know our affairs are in the hands of one who has wisdom to do for us beyond our narrow prudence, and we cannot, by taking thought, avoid any afflictive dispensation which God’s providence may have in store for us. Let us therefore enjoy with thankfulness the present sunshine, without advertising to the coming storm. Few and transitory are the intervals of calm and settled day with which we are cheered in the tempestuous voyage of life ; we ought therefore to enjoy them, while they last, with unmixed delight, and not turn the blessing into a curse by lamenting that it cannot endure without interruption. We, my beloved friend, are united in

our affections by no common bands—bands which, I trust, are too strong to be easily dissevered—yet we know not what God may intend with respect to us, nor have we any business to inquire—we should rely on the mercy of our Father, who is in heaven—and if we are to anticipate, we should hope the best. I stand self-accused therefore for my prurient, and, I may say, *irreligious* fears. A prudent foresight, as it may guard us from many impending dangers, is laudable ; but a morbid propensity to seize and brood over future ills, is agonizing, while it is utterly useless, and therefore ought to be repressed.

I have received intelligence, since writing the above, which nearly settles my future destination. A——informs me that Mr Martyn, a Fellow of St John's, has about 20*l.* a-year to dispose of towards keeping a religious man at College—and he seems convinced that if my mother allows me 20*l.* a-year more, I may live at St John's provided I could gain admittance, which, at that college, is difficult, unless you have previously stood in the list for a year. Mr Martyn thinks, if I propose myself immediately, I shall get upon the foundation, and by this day's post I have transmitted testimonials of my classical acquirements. In a few days, therefore, I hope to hear that I am on the boards of St John's.

Mr Dashwood has informed me, that he also has received a letter from a gentleman, a magistrate near Cambridge, offering me all the assistance in his power towards getting through College, so as there be no obligation. My way therefore is now pretty clear.

I have just risen from my knees, returning thanks to our heavenly Father for this providential opening—my heart is quite full. Help me to be grateful to him, and pray that I may be a faithful minister of his word.

\* \* \*

TO MR R. A——

Nottingham, 7th May, 1804

Dear Robert,

\* \* \*

YOU don't know how I long to hear how your declamation was received, and 'all about it', as we say in these parts. I hope to see it, when I see its author and pronouncer. Themistocles, no doubt, received due praise from you for his valour and *subtlety*; but I trust you poured down a torrent of eloquent indignation upon the ruling principles of his actions and the motive of his conduct, while you exalted the mild and unassuming virtues of his more amiable rival. The object of Themistocles was the aggrandizement of himself, that of Aristides the welfare and prosperity of the state. The one endeavoured to swell the glory of his country; the other to promote its security, external and internal, foreign and domestic. While you estimated the services which Themistocles rendered to the state, in opposition to those of Aristides, you of course remembered that the former had the largest scope for action, and that he influenced his countrymen

to fall into all his plans, while they banished his competitor, not by his superior wisdom or goodness, but by those intrigues and factious artifices which Aristides would have disdained. Themistocles certainly did use *bad* means to a desirable end: and if we may assume it as an axiom, that Providence will forward the designs of a good sooner than those of a bad man; whatever inequality of abilities there may be between the two characters, it will follow that, had Athens remained under the guidance of Aristides, it would have been better for her. The difference between Themistocles and Aristides seems to me to be this: That the former was a wise and a *fortunate* man; and that the latter, though he had equal wisdom, had not equal good fortune. We may admire the heroic qualities and the crafty policy of the one, but to the temperate and disinterested patriotism, the good and virtuous dispositions of the other, we can alone give the meed of heart-felt *praise*.

I only mean by this, that we must not infer Themistocles to have been *the better* or *the greater* man, because he rendered more essential services to the state than Aristides, nor even that his system was the most judicious—but only, that, by decision of character, and by good fortune, his measures succeeded best.

\* \* \*

The rules of composition are, in my opinion, very few. If we have a mature acquaintance with our subject, there is little fear of our expressing it as we

ought, provided we have had *some little* experience in writing. The first thing to be aimed at is perspicuity. *That* is the great point, which, once attained, will make all other obstacles smooth to us. In order to write perspicuously, we should have a *perfect* knowledge of the topic on which we are about to treat, in all its bearings and dependencies. We should think well beforehand what will be the clearest method of conveying the drift of our design. This is similar to what the painters call the massing, or getting the effect of the more prominent lights and shades by broad dashes of the pencil. When our thesis is well arranged in our mind, and we have predisposed our arguments, reasonings, and illustrations, so as they shall all conduce to the object in view, in regular sequence and gradation, we may sit down and express our ideas in as clear a manner as we can, always using such words as are most suited to our purpose; and when two modes of expression, equally luminous, present themselves, selecting that which is the most harmonious and elegant.

It sometimes happens that writers, in aiming at perspicuity, overreach themselves, by employing too many words, and perplex the mind by a multiplicity of illustrations. This is a very fatal error. Circumlocution seldom conduces to plainness; and you may take it as a maxim, that, when once an idea is *clearly expressed*, every additional stroke will only confuse the mind, and diminish the effect.

When you have once learned to express yourself

with clearness and propriety, you will soon arrive at elegance. Everything else, in fact, will follow as of course. But I warn you not to invert the order of things, and be paying your addresses to the Graces, when you ought to be studying perspicuity. Young writers, in general, are too solicitous to round off their periods, and regulate the cadences of their style. Hence the feeble pleonasms and idle repetitions which deform their pages. If you would have your compositions vigorous, and masculine in their tone, let every WORD TELL; and when you detect yourself polishing off a sentence with expletives, regard yourself in exactly the same predicament with a poet who should eke out the measure of his verses with titum, titom, tee, sir.

So much for style——

\* \* \*

TO MR R. A——

Nottingham, 9th May, 1804

My Dear Friend,

\* \* \*

I HAVE not spoken as yet to Messrs Coldham and Enfield. Your injunction to suspend so doing, has left me in a state of mind, which, I think, I am blamable for indulging, but which is indescribably painful. I had no sleep last night, partly from anxiety, and partly from the effects of a low fever,

which has preyed on my nerves for the last six or seven days. I am afraid, Robert, my religion is very superficial. I ought not to feel this distrust of God's providence. Should I now be prevented from going to College, I shall regard it as a just punishment for my want of faith.

I conclude Mr Martyn has failed in procuring the aid he expected? Is it so?

\* \* \*

On these contingencies, Robert, you must know from my peculiar situation, I shall never be able to get to college. My mother, at all times averse, has lately been pressed by one of the deacons of Castlegate Meeting, to prevail on me to go to Dr Williams. This idea now fills her head, and she would feel no small degree of pleasure in the failure of my resources for College. Besides this, her natural anxiety for my welfare will never allow her to permit me to go to the university depending almost entirely on herself, knowing not only the *inadequacy*, but the great *uncertainty*, of her aid. Coldham and Enfield must likewise be satisfied that my way is clear: I tremble, I almost despair. A variety of contending emotions, which I cannot particularize, agitate my mind. I tremble lest I should have mistaken my call: these are solemn warnings: but no—I cannot entertain the thought. To the ministry I am devoted I believe, by God; in what way must be left to his providence.

\* \* \*

TO HIS BROTHER NEVILLE

Nottingham, June, 1804

Dear Neville,

IN answer to your question, whether the Sizars have any duties to perform, I answer, No. Somebody, perhaps, has been hinting that there are servile offices to be performed by Sizars. It is a common opinion, but perfectly erroneous. The *Oxford servitors*, I believe, have many unpleasant duties; but the Sizars at Cambridge only differ from the rest in name.

\* \* \*

TO HIS BROTHER NEVILLE

Wilford, near Nottingham, —, 1804

Dear Neville,

\* \* \*

I HAVE run very much on the wrong side of the post here; for having sent copies round to such persons as had given me in their names, as subscribers, with compliments, they have placed them to the account of presents!

\* \* \*

And, now my dear Neville, I must give you the most ingenious specimen of the invention of petty

envy you perhaps ever heard of. When Addison produced *Cato*, it was currently received, that he had bought it of a vicar for 40*l*. The Nottingham gentry, knowing me too poor to buy my poems, thought they could do no better than place it to the account of family affection, and, lo! Mrs Smith is become the sole author, who has made use of her brother's name as a feint! I heard of this report *first* covertly: it was said that Mrs Smith was the principal writer: next it was said that I was the author of one of the inferior smaller pieces only (*My Study*); and, lastly, on mentioning the circumstances to Mr A——, he confessed that he had heard several times that my 'sister was the sole quill-driver of the family, and that master Henry, in particular, was rather shallow', but that he had refrained from telling me, because he thought it would vex me. Now, as to the vexing me, it only has afforded me a hearty laugh. I sent my compliments to one great lady, whom I heard propagating this ridiculous report, and congratulated her on her ingenuity, telling her, as a great secret, that neither my sister or myself had any claim to any of the poems, for the right author was the Great Mogul's cousin-german. The best part of the story is, that my good friend, Benj Maddock, found means to get me to write verses extempore, to prove whether I could tag rhymes or not, which, it seems, he doubted.

## TO ROBERT SOUTHEY

Nottingham, 9th July, 1804

\* \* \*

I CAN *now* inform you, that I have reason to believe my way through college is clear before me. From what source I know not; but through the hands of Mr Simeon I am provided with 30*l.* per annum; and while things go on so prosperously as they do now, I can command 20*l.* or 30*l.* more from my friends, and this, in all probability, until I take my degree. The friends to whom I allude are my *mother* and *brother*.

My mother has, for these five years past, kept a boarding school in Nottingham: and, so long as her school continues in its present state, she can supply me with 15*l.* or 20*l.* per annum, without inconvenience; but should she die, (and her health is, I fear, but infirm,) that resource will altogether fail. Still, I think, my prospect is so good as to preclude any anxiety on my part; and perhaps my income will be more than adequate to my wants, as I shall be a Sizar of St John's where the college emoluments are more than commonly large.

In this situation of my affairs, you will perhaps agree with me in thinking that a subscription for a volume of poems will not be necessary; and, certainly, that measure is one which will be better avoided, if it may be. I have lately looked over

what poems I have by me in manuscript, and find them more numerous than I expected ; but many of them would perhaps be styled *mopish* and *mawkish*, and even *misanthropic*, in the language of the world ; though, from the latter sentiment, I am sure I can say, no one is more opposite than I am. These poems, therefore, will never see the light, as, from a teacher of that word which gives all strength to the feeble, more fortitude and christian philosophy may, with justice, be expected than they display. The remainder of my verses would not possess any great interest : mere description is often mere nonsense : and I have acquired a strange habit, whenever I do point out a train of moral sentiment from the contemplation of a picture, to give it a gloomy and querulous cast, when there is nothing in the occasion but what ought to inspire joy and gratitude. I have one poem, however, of some length, which I shall preserve ; and I have another of considerable magnitude in design, but of which only a part is written, which I am fairly at a loss whether to commit to the flames, or at some future opportunity to finish. The subject is the death of Christ. I have no friend whose opinion is at all to be relied on, to whom I could submit it, and, perhaps, after all, it may be absolutely worthless.

With regard to that part of my provision which is derived from my unknown friend, it is of course conditional : and as it is not a provision for a *poet*, but for a *candidate for orders*, I believe it is expected, and indeed it has been hinted as a thing advisable,

that I should barter the Muses for mathematics, and abstain from writing verses at least until I take my degree. If I find that all my time will be requisite, in order to *prepare* for the important office I am destined to fill, I shall certainly do my duty, however severely it may cost me : but if I find I may lawfully and conscientiously relax myself at intervals, with those delightful reveries which have hitherto formed the chief pleasure of my life, I shall, without scruple, indulge myself in them.

I know the pursuit of Truth is a much more important business than the exercise of the imagination ; and amid all the quaintness and stiff method of the mathematicians, I can even discover a source of chaste and exalted pleasure. To their severe but salutary discipline, I must now ‘subdue the vivid shapings of my youth’ ; and though I shall cast many a fond lingering look to Fancy’s more alluring paths, yet I shall be repaid by the anticipation of days, when I may enjoy the sweet satisfaction of being useful, in no ordinary degree, to my fellow-mortals.

\* \* \*

TO MR B. MADDOCK

Nottingham, September, 1804

My Dear Ben,

By the time you will open this letter, we shall have parted, God only knows whether ever to meet

again. The chances and casualties of human life are such as to render it always questionable whether three months may not separate us forever from an absent friend.

\* \* \*

For my part, I shall feel a vacuum when you are gone, which will not easily be filled up. I shall miss my only intimate friend—the companion of my walks—the interrupter of my evening studies. I shall return, in a great measure, to my old solitary habits. I cannot associate with \* \* nor yet with \* \* \* has no place in my affections, though he has in my esteem. It was to you alone I looked as my adopted brother, and (although, for reasons you may hereafter learn, I have not made you my perfect confidant) my comforter.—*Heumihī amice, Vale, longum Vale!* I hope you will sometimes think of me, and give me a portion in your prayers.

\* \* \*

Perhaps it may be that I am not formed for friendship, that I expect more than can ever be found. Time will tutor me; I am a singular being under a common outside: I am a profound dissembler of my inward feelings, and necessity has taught me the art. I am long before I can unbosom to a friend, yet, I think, I am sincere in my friendship: you must not attribute this to any suspiciousness of nature, but must consider that I lived seventeen years my own confidant, my own friend, full of projects and strange thoughts, and confiding

them to no one. I am habitually reserved, and habitually cautious in letting it be seen that I hide anything. Towards you I would fain conquer these habits, and this is one step towards effecting the conquest.

I am not well, Ben, to-night, as my hand-writing and style will show ; I have rambled on, however, to some length ; my letter may serve to beguile a few moments on your way. I must say good-by to you, and may God bless you, and preserve you, and be your guide and director forever ! Remember he is always with you ; remember that in him you have a comforter in every gloom. In your wakeful nights, when you have not me to talk to, his ear will be bent down on your pillow ; what better bosom friend has a man than the merciful and benignant Father of all ? Happy, thrice happy, are you in the privilege of his grace and acceptance.

Dear Ben, I am your true friend,

H. K. WHITE

## TO HIS MOTHER

Winteringham, 16th December, 1804

My Dear Mother,

SINCE I wrote to you last I have been rather ill, having caught cold, which brought on a slight fever. Thanks to excellent nursing, I am now pretty much recovered, and only want strength to be perfectly

re-established. Mr Grainger is himself a very good physician, but when I grew worse, he deemed it necessary to send for a medical gentleman from Barton ; so that, in addition to my illness, I expect an apothecary's bill. This, however, will not be a very long one, as Mr Grainger has chiefly supplied me with drugs. It is judged absolutely necessary that I should take wine, and that I should ride. It is with very great reluctance that I agree to incur these additional expenses, and I shall endeavour to cut them off as soon as possible. Mr and Mrs Grainger have behaved like parents to me since I have been ill : four and five times in the night has Mr G. come to see me ; and had I been at home, I could not have been treated with more tenderness and care. Mrs Grainger has insisted on my drinking their wine, and was very angry when I made scruples ; but I cannot let them be at all this additional expense—in some way or other I must pay them, as the sum I now give, considering the mode in which we are accommodated, is very trifling. Mr Grainger does not keep a horse, so that I shall be obliged to hire one ; but there will be no occasion for this for any length of time, as my strength seems to return as rapidly as it was rapidly reduced. Don't make yourself in the least uneasy about this, I pray, as I am quite recovered, and not at all apprehensive of any consequences. I have no cough, nor any symptom which might indicate an affection of the lungs. I read very little at present.

I thought it necessary to write to you on this

subject now, as I feared you might have an exaggerated account from Mr Almond's friends, and alarm yourself.

\* \* \*

## TO HIS BROTHER NEVILLE

Winteringham, 20th May, 1805

Dear Neville,

\* \* \*

My first business must be to thank you for the \* \* \*, which I received by Mr K. Swann; you must not suppose that I feel reluctance to lie under obligations to so affectionate a brother, when I say, that I have felt uneasy ever since on more accounts than one. I am convinced, in the first place, that you have little to spare; and I fear, in the second, that I shall prove a hinderance to a measure which I know to be necessary for your health: I mean your going to some watering-place for the benefit of sea-bathing. I am aware of the nature of injuries received at the joints, especially the knee; and I am sure nothing will strengthen your knee more for the present, and prevent the recurrence of disease in it for the future. I would have you, therefore, if by any means you can be spared in London, go to one of the neighbouring coasts, and take sufficient time to recover your strength. You may pitch upon some pleasant place, where there will be sufficient company to amuse you, an

not so much as to create bustle, and make a toil of reflection, and turn retirement into riot. Since you must be as sensible as I am, that this is necessary for your health, I shall feel assured, if you do not go, that I am the cause, a consideration I would gladly spare myself.

\*            \*            \*

## TO HIS BROTHER NEVILLE

Nottingham, June, 1805

My Dear Brother,

I WROTE you a long letter from Winteringham some time ago, which I now apprehend you have never received, or, if you have, some more important concerns have occupied your time than writing to me on general subjects. Feeling, however, rather weary to-night, I have determined to send this sheet to you, as a proof that, if I am not a *punctual*, I am certainly far from a ceremonious correspondent.

Our adventure on the Humber you should have learned from K. Swann, who, with much minuteness, filled up three sides of a letter to his friend with the account. The matter was simply this: He, Almond, and myself, made an excursion about twelve or fourteen miles up the Humber; on our return ran aground, were left by the tide on a sand-bank, and were obliged to remain six hours in an open boat exposed to a heavy rain, high wind, and

piercing cold, until the tide rose, when two men brought a boat to our assistance. We got home about twelve o'clock at night: no evil consequences ensued, owing to our using every exertion we could think of to keep warmth in our bodies.

\* \* \*

TO HIS BROTHER NEVILLE

Winteringham, 20th August, 1805

Dear Neville,

\* \* \*

I AM very sensible of all your affection, in your anxiety that I should not diminish my books; but I am by no means relieved from the anxiety which, on more accounts than one, I am under, as to my present situation, so great a burthen to the family, when I ought to be a support. My father made some heavy complaints when I was at home; and though I am induced to believe that he is enough harassed to render it very excusable, yet I cannot but feel strongly the peculiarity of my situation; and, at my age, feel ashamed that I should add to his burdens. At present I have my hands completely tied behind me. When I get to college, I hope to have more opportunities of advantage, and, if I am fortunate, I shall probably relieve my father and mother from the weight which I now lay upon them. I wish you, if you read this letter to my mother, to omit this part.

\* \* \*

## TO CAPEL LOFFT, ESQ.

Winteringham, 10th September, 1805

Dear Sir,

YOUR letter has at length reached me at this place, where I have been for the last ten months employed in classical reading with Mr Grainger. It gives me pleasure to hear of you, and of poetry: for, since I came here, I have not only been utterly shut out from all intercourse with the lettered world, but have totally laid aside the pen of inspiration. I have been actuated to this by a sense of duty; for I wish to prove that I have not coveted the ministerial office through the desire of learned leisure, but with an ardent wish to do my duty as a teacher of the truth. I should blush to present myself as a candidate for that office in an unqualified and unprepared state; and as I have placed my idea of the necessary qualifications very high, all the time between now and my taking my degree will be little enough for these purposes alone. I often, however, cast a look of fond regret to the darling occupations of my younger hours, and the tears rush into my eyes, as I fancy I see the few wild flowers of poetic genius, with which I have been blessed, withering with neglect. Poetry has been to me something more than amusement; it has been a cheering companion when I have had no other to fly to, and a delightful solace when consolation has been in some measure

needful. I cannot, therefore, discard so old and faithful a friend without deep regret, especially when I reflect that, stung by my ingratitude, he may desert me forever !

\* \* \*

With regard to your intended publication, you do me too much honour by inserting my puerilities along with such good company as I know I shall meet there. I wish I could present you with some sonnets worthy of your work. I have looked back amongst my old papers, and find a few verses under that name, which were written between the time when *Clifton Grove* was sent to the press, and its final appearance. The looking over these papers has recalled a little of my old warmth, and I have scribbled some lines, which, as they owe their rise to your letter, I may fairly (if I have room) present to you. I cannot read the sonnets which I have found amongst my papers with pleasure, and therefore I shall not presume to show them to you. I shall anxiously expect the publication of your work.

I shall be in Cambridge next month, being admitted a Sizar at St John's. Trinity would have suited my plans better, but the expenses of that college are greater.

With thanks for your kind remembrance to me, I remain, dear sir, very respectfully and thankfully  
yours,

H. K. WHITE

YES, my stray steps have wander'd, wander'd far  
 From thee, and long, heart-soothing Poesy !  
 And many a flower, which in the passing time  
 My heart hath register'd, nipp'd by the chill  
 Of undeserved neglect, hath shrunk and died.  
 Heart-soothing Poesy !—Though thou hast ceased  
 To hover o'er the many-voiced strings  
 Of my long silent lyre, yet thou canst still  
 Call the warm tear from its thrice-hallow'd cell,  
 And with recalled images of bliss  
 Warm my reluctant heart.—Yes, I would throw,  
 Once more would throw, a quick and hurried hand  
 O'er the responding chords.—It hath not ceased—  
 It cannot, will not cease ; the heavenly warmth  
 Plays round my heart, and mantles o'er my cheek :  
 Still, though unbidden, plays.—Fair Poesy !  
 'The summer and the spring, the wind and rain,  
 Sunshine, and storm, with various interchange,  
 Have mark'd full many a day, and week, and month,  
 Since by dark wood, or hamlet far retired,  
 Spell-struck, with thee I loiter'd.—Sorceress !  
 I cannot burst thy bonds !—It is but lift  
 Thy blue eyes to that deep-bespangled vault,  
 Wreath thy enchanted tresses round thine arm,  
 And mutter some obscure and charmed rhyme,  
 And I could follow thee, on thy night's work,  
 Up to the regions of thrice-chastened fire,  
 Or in the caverns of the ocean flood,  
 Thrid the light mazes of thy volant foot.  
 Yet other duties call me, and mine ear  
 Must turn away from the high minstrelsy  
 Of thy soul-trancing harp, unwillingly  
 Must turn away ; there are severer strains,  
 (And surely they are sweet as ever smote  
 The ear of spirit, from this mortal coil

Released and disembodied), there are strains,  
 Forbid to all, save those whom solemn thought,  
 Through the probation of revolving years,  
 And mighty converse with the spirit of truth,  
 Have purged and purified.—To these my soul  
 Aspireth ; and to this sublimer end  
 I gird myself, and climb the toilsome steep  
 With patient expectation.—Yea, sometimes  
 Foretaste of bliss rewards me ; and sometimes  
 Spirits unseen upon my footsteps wait,  
 And minister strange music, which doth seem  
 Now near, now distant, now on high, now low,  
 'Then swelling from all sides, with bliss complete,  
 And full fruition filling all the soul.  
 Surely such ministry, though rare, may soothe  
 The steep ascent, and cheat the lassitude  
 Of toil ; and but that my fond heart  
 Reverts to day-dreams of the summer gone,  
 When by clear fountain, or embowered brake,  
 I lay a listless muser, prizing, far  
 Above all other lore, the poet's theme ;  
 But for such recollections I could brace  
 My stubborn spirit for the arduous path  
 Of science unregretting ; eye afar  
 Philosophy upon her steepest height,  
 And with bold step, and resolute attempt,  
 Pursue her to the innermost recess,  
 Where throned in light she sits, the Queen of Truth.

These verses form nearly the only poetical effort of this year. Pardon their imperfections.

## TO MR B. MADDOCK

St John's, 18th October, 1805

My dear Ben,

I AM at length finally settled in my rooms, and, according to my promise, I write to you to tell you so. I did not feel quite comfortable at first here; but I now begin to feel at home, and relish my silent and thoughtful cup of tea more than ever. Amongst our various occupations, that of attending chapel is to me not the least irksome, for the service is read in general below the span of my auditory nerve; but when they chant, I am quite charmed, for our organ is fine, and the voices are good. This is, however, only on high days and festivals, in which number the present day is to be reckoned (St Luke's).

My mathematical studies do not agree with me, and you may satisfy yourself I shall never be a senior wrangler. Many men come up with knowledge enough for the highest honours, and how can a man be expected to keep up with them who starts without any previous fund? Our lectures begin on Monday, and then I shall know more of college difficulties.

My rooms are in the top story of the farthest court of St John's (which you perhaps remember) near the cloisters. They are light, and tolerably pleasant; though, as there was no furniture in them, and I have not yet bought many necessary articles, they look very bare. Your phiz over the chimney-piece

has been recognized by two of my fellow students ; the one recollected its likeness to Mr Maddock of Magdalene ; and the other said it was like a young man whom he had seen with Mr Maddock, and whom he supposed to be his brother.

Of my new acquaintances, I have become intimate with a Mr \* \* \*, who, I hope, will be senior wrangler. He is a very serious and friendly man, and a man of no common *mathematical* talents. He lives in the same court with me. Besides him, I know of none whose friendship I should value ; and *including* him, no one whose hand I would take in preference to that of my old friend, so long as I see my old friend with his old face. When you have learned to be other than what you are, I shall not regret that B. M. is no longer my friend, but that my former friend is now no more.

\* \* \*

I walked through Magdalene the other day, and I could not help anticipating the time when I should come to drink your tea, and swallow your bread and butter, within the sacred walls. You must know our college was originally a convent for Black Friars ; and if a man of the reign of Henry the Sixth were to peep out of his grave, in the adjoining church-yard, and look into our portals, judging by our dress and appearance, he might deem us a convent of Black Friars still. Some of our brethren, it is true, would seem of very unsightly bulk ; but many of them, with eyes sunk into their heads, from poring

over the mathematics, might pass very well for the fasting and mortified shadows of penitent monks.

With regard to the expenses of our college, I can now speak decisively; and I can tell you, that I shall be here an independent man. I am a Senior Sizar, under very favourable circumstances, and, I believe, the profits of my situation will nearly equal the actual expenses of the college. But this is no rule for other colleges. I am on the *best side* (there are two divisions) of St John's, and the expenses here are less than anywhere else in the university.

I have this week written some very elaborate verses for a college prize, and I have at length learned that I am not qualified for a competitor, not being a Lady Margaret's scholar: so that I have lost my labour.—Compared with the other men of this large college, I find I am a respectable classic, and if I had time to give to the languages, I think I should ultimately succeed in them in no small degree; but the fates forbid; mathematics I must read, and in mathematics I know I never shall excel. These are harassing reflections for a poor young man gaping for a fellowship!

If I chose I could find a good deal of religious society here, but I must not indulge myself with it too much. Mr Simeon's preaching strikes me much.

\* \* \*

I beg you will answer a thousand such questions as these without my asking them.

This is a letter of intelligence:—next shall be

sentiment, (or Gothic arch, for they are synonymous according to Mr M.).

TO HIS MOTHER

St John's, 26th October, 1805

Dear Mother,

\* \* \*

YOU seem to repose so little confidence in what I say with regard to my college expenses, that I am not encouraged to hope you will give me much credit for what I am about to say, namely, that had I no money at all, either from my friends or Mr Simeon, I could manage to live here. My situation is so very favourable, and the necessary expenses so very few, that I shall want very little more than will suffice for clothes and books. I have got the bills of Mr \* \*, a Sizar of this college, now before me, and from them, and his own account, I will give you a statement of what my college bills will amount to.

\* \* \*

Thus my college expenses will not be more than 12*l.* or 15*l.* a-year at the most. I shall not have any occasion for the whole sum I have a claim upon Mr Simeon for; and if things go well, I shall be able to live without being dependent on any one. The Mr \* \*, whose bills I have borrowed, has been at college three years. He came over from \* \* with

10*l.* in his pocket, and has no friends, or any income or emolument whatever, except what he receives for his Sizarship; yet he does support himself, and that, too, very genteelly. It is only men's extravagance that makes college life so expensive. There are Sizars at St John's who spend 150*l.* a-year: but they are gay, dissipated men, who choose to be Sizars in order that they may have more money to lavish on their pleasures. Our dinners and suppers cost us nothing; and if a man choose to eat milk-breakfasts, and go without tea, he may live absolutely for nothing; for his college emoluments will cover the rest of his expenses. Tea is indeed almost superfluous, since we do not rise from dinner till half past three, and the supper bell rings a quarter before nine. Our mode of living is not to be complained of, for the table is covered with all possible variety; and on feast-days, which our fellows take care are pretty frequent, we have wine.

You will now, I trust, feel satisfied on this subject, and will no longer give yourself unnecessary uneasiness on my account.

\* \* \*

I was unfortunate enough to be put into unfurnished rooms, so that my furniture will cost me a little more than I expected; I suppose about 15*l.*, or perhaps not quite so much. I sleep on a hair mattress, which I find just as comfortable as a bed; it only cost me 4*l.*, along with blankets, counterpane, and pillows, &c. I have three rooms—a sitting-room, a bedroom, and a kind of scullery or pantry. My sitting-

room is very light and pleasant, and what does not often happen, the walls are in good case, having been lately stained green.

I must commission my sister to make me a pair of letter racks, but they must not be fine, because my furniture is not very fine. I think the old shape (or octagons, one upon another) is the neatest, and white the best colour. I wish Maria would paint vignettes in the squares, because then I should see how her drawing proceeds. You must know that these are not intended as mere matters of show, but are intended to answer some purpose; there are so many particular places to attend on particular days, that unless a man is very cautious, he has nothing else to do than to pay forfeits for non-attendance. A few cards, and a little rack, will be a short way of helping the memory.

I think I must get a supply of sugar from London; for if I buy it here, it will cost me 1s. 6d. per pound, which is rather too much. I have got tea enough to last the term out.

\* \* \*

Although you may be quite easy on the subject of my future support, yet you must not form splendid ideas of my success at the university, for the lecturers all speak so low, and we sit at such a distance, that I cannot hear a syllable. I have, therefore, no more advantage than if I were studying at home.

I beg we may have no more doubts and fears, at least on my score. I think I am now very near being off your hands; and, since my education at the

university is quite secure, you need not entertain gloomy apprehensions for the future; my maintenance will, at all events, be decent and respectable: and you must not grieve yourself because I cannot be as rich as an alderman.

\* \* \*

Do not show this letter to *all comers*, nor leave it about, for people will have a very mean idea of university education, when they find it costs so little; but if they are saucy on the subject, tell them—I have a lord just under me.

\* \* \*

## TO THE REV. JOHN DASHWOOD

St John's, 26th October, 1805

Dear Sir,

IT is now many months since I wrote to you, and I have not received any answer. I should not have troubled you with this letter, but that, considering how much I owe to you, I thought the rules and observances of strict etiquette might with moral propriety be dispensed with.

Suffer me therefore to tell you, that I am quietly and comfortably settled at St John's, silently conforming myself to the habits of college life, and pursuing my studies with such moderation as I think necessary for my health. I feel very much at home,

and tolerably happy ; although the peculiar advantages of university education will in a great measure be lost to me, since there is not one of the lecturers whom I am able to hear.

My literary ambition is, I think, now fast subsiding, and a better emulation springing up in its room. I conceive that, considering the disadvantages under which I labour, very little can be expected from me in the Senate House. I shall not, however, remit my exertions, but shall at least strive to acquit myself with credit, though I cannot hope for the more splendid honours.

With regard to my college expenses, I have the pleasure to inform you, that my situation is so favourable, that I shall be obliged, in strict rectitude, to wave the offers of many of my friends. I shall not even need the sum Mr Simeon mentioned, after the first year ; and it is not impossible that I may be able to live without any assistance at all. I confess I feel pleasure in the thought of this, not through any vain pride of independence, but because I shall then give a more unbiassed testimony to the Truth, than if I were *supposed* to be bound to it by any ties of obligation or gratitude. I shall always feel as much indebted for intended, as for actually afforded assistance ; and though I should never think a sense of thankfulness an oppressive burthen, yet I shall be happy to evince it, when, *in the eyes of the world*, the obligation to it has been discharged.

I hope you will ere long relieve me from the painful thought that I lie under your displeasure ; and believe me, dear sir, most sincerely and affectionately yours,

H. K. WHITE

### TO HIS BROTHER NEVILLE

St John's, Cambridge, 10th December, 1805

Dear Neville,

I AM so truly hurt that you should again complain of my long silence, that I cannot refrain from sending this by the post, although I shall send you a parcel to-morrow. The reason of my not having sent you the cravats sooner, is the difficulty I have found in getting them together, since part were in the hands of my laundress, and part dirty. I do not know whether you will find them right, as my linen is in other respects deficient, and I have a cause at issue with my washerwoman on that score. This place is literally a den of thieves ; my bed-maker, whom we call a *gyf*, from a Greek word signifying a vulture, runs away with everything he can lay his hands on, and when he is caught, says he only borrows them. He stole a sack of coals a-week, as regularly as the week came, when first I had fires ; but I have stopped the run of this business, by a monstrous large padlock, which is hung to the staple of the bin. His next trick was to bring me four candles for a pound instead of six ; and this trade he carried on for some time, until

I accidentally discovered the trick : he then said he had always brought me right until that time, and that then he had brought me *fives*, but had given Mr H. (a man on the same staircase) one, because *he thought* he understood I had borrowed one of him ; on inquiring of Mr H. he had not given him one according to his pretence : but the gentleman was not caught yet, for he declared he had *lent* one to the bed-maker of Lord B. in the rooms below. His neatest trick is going to the grocer every now and then for articles in your name, which he converts to his own use. I have stopped him here too, by keeping a cheque book. Tea, sugar, and pocket-handkerchiefs, are his natural perquisites, and I verily believe he will soon be filling his canister out of mine before my face. There is no redress for all this ; for if you change, you are no better off : they are all alike. They know you regard them as a pack of thieves, and their only concern is to steal so dexterously that they may not be confronted with direct proof.

\* \* \*

Do not be surprised at any apparent negligence in my letters : my time has so many calls for it, that half my duties are neglected. Our college examination comes on next Tuesday, and it is of the utmost moment that I acquit myself well there. A month after will follow the scholarship examination. My time, therefore, at present, will scarcely permit the performance of my promise with respect to the historical papers, but I have them in mind, and I am

much bent on perfecting them in a manner superior to their commencement.

I would fain write to my brother James, who must by no means think I forget him ; but I fear I shall see him before I write to him on the accounts above stated. The examination for the scholarship is distinct from that of our college, which is a very important one ; and while I am preparing for the one I necessarily neglect the other.

I wish very much to hear from you on religious topics ; and remember, that although my leisure at present will not allow me to write to you all I wish, yet it will be the highest gratification to me to read your letters, especially when they relate to your Christian progress. I beseech you not to relax, as you value your peace of mind, and the repose of a dying bed. I wish you would take in the *Christian Observer*, which is a cheap work, and will yield you much profitable amusement. I have it here for nothing, and can send you up some of the numbers if you like.

Remember, and let my mother know, that I have no chance for the university scholarship, and that I only sit for the purpose of letting the university know that I am a decent proficient in the languages.

There is one just vacant which I can certainly get, but I should be obliged to go to Peter-house in consequence, which will not be advisable—but I must make inquiries about it. I speak with certainty on this subject, because it is restricted to candidates who are in their first year, amongst whom I should probably be equal to any. The others are open to bachelors.

TO HIS BROTHER NEVILLE

St John's, 19th December, 1805

Dear Neville,

I WAS sorry to receive your letter, desiring me to defer my journey ; and I am sorry to be forced to tell you the reason of my coming to town sooner than you wish me. I have had an attack of my old nervous complaint, and my spirits have been so wretchedly shattered, that my surgeon says I shall never be well till I have removed somewhere, where I can have society and amusement. It is a very distressing thing to be ill in college, where you have no attendance, and very little society. Mr Catton, my tutor, has prevailed upon me, by pressing wishes, to go into the hall to be examined with the men of my year : I have gone through two examinations, and I have one to come ; after that is over, he told me I had better go to my friends directly, and relieve myself with complete relaxation from study. Under these circumstances, the object of my journey to London will be answered, by the mere residence in my aunt's family, and by a cessation from reading. While I am here, I am wretched ; I cannot read, the slightest application makes me faint ; I have very little society, and that is quite a force upon my friends. I am determined, therefore, to leave this place on Saturday morning, and you may rest satisfied that the purpose of my

journey will be fully accomplished by the prattle of my aunt's little ones, and her care. I am not an invalid, since I have no sickness or ailment, but I am weak and low-spirited, and unable to read. The last is the greatest calamity I can experience of a worldly nature. My mind preys upon itself. Had it not been for *Leeson*, of Clare Hall, I could not have gone through this week. I have been examined twice, and almost without looking over the subjects, and I have given satisfaction; but I am obliged to be kept up by strong medicines to endure this exertion, which is very great.

I am happy, however, to tell you, I am better; and Mr Farish, the surgeon, says, a few days will re-establish me when I get into another scene, and into society.

\* \* \*

## TO HIS MOTHER

London, 24th December, 1805

My Dear Mother,

You will, no doubt, have been surprised at not having heard from me for so long a time, and you will be no less so to find that I am writing this at my aunt's in this far-famed city. I have been so much taken up with our college examinations of late, that I could not find time to write even to you, and I am now come to town, in order to give myself every

relaxation and amusement I can ; for I had read so much at Cambridge, that my health was rather affected, and I was advised to give myself the respite of a week or a fortnight, in order to recover strength. I arrived in town on Saturday night, and should have written yesterday, in order to remove any uneasiness you might feel on my account; but there is no post on Sunday.

I have now to communicate some agreeable intelligence to you. Last week being the close of the Michaelmas term, and our college examination, our tutor, who is a very great man, sent for me, and told me he was sorry to hear I had been ill : he understood I was low-spirited, and wished to know whether I frightened myself about college expenses. I told him, that they did contribute some little to harass me, because I was as yet uncertain what the bills of my first year would amount to. His answer was to this purpose : ‘ Mr White, I beg you will not trouble yourself on this subject : your emoluments will be very great, very great indeed, and I will take care your expenses are not very burdensome.—Leave that to me ! ’ He advised me to go to my friends, and amuse myself with a total cessation from reading. After our college examination (which lasted six days) was over, he sent for me again, and repeated what he had said before about the expenses of the college ; and he added, that if I went on as I had begun, and made myself a good scholar, I might rely on being provided for by the college ; for if *the county should be full*, and they could not elect me a fellow, they would

recommend me to another college, where they would be glad to receive a clever man from their hands ; or, at all events, they could *always* get a young man a situation as a private tutor in a nobleman's family : or could put him in some handsome way of preferment. ' We make it a rule (he said) of providing for a clever man, whose fortune is small ; and you may therefore rest assured, Mr White, that, after you have taken your degree, you will be provided with a genteel competency *by the college.*' He begged I would be under no apprehensions on these accounts : he shook hands with me very affectionately, and wished me a speedy recovery. These attentions from a man like the tutor of St John's are very marked ; and Mr Catton is well known for doing more than he says. I am sure, after these assurances from a principal of so respectable a society as St John's, I have nothing more to fear ; and I hope you will never repine on my account again : according to every appearance, my lot in life is certain.

\* \* \*

TO MR B. MADDOCK

London, Xmas, 1805

My Dear Ben,

YOU would have had no reason to complain of my long silence, had I preferred my self-justification to your ease. I wrote you a letter, which now lies in my drawer at St John's, but in such a weak state

of body, and in so desponding and comfortless a tone of mind, that I knew it would give you pain, and therefore I chose not to send it. I have indeed been ill; but, thanks to God, I am recovered. My nerves were miserably shattered by over-application, and the absence of all that could amuse, and the presence of many things which weighed heavy upon my spirits. When I found myself too ill to read, and too desponding to endure my own reflections, I discovered that it is really a miserable thing to be destitute of the soothing and supporting hand when nature most needs it. I wandered up and down from one man's room to another, and from one college to another, imploring society, a little conversation, and a little relief of the burden which pressed upon my spirits; and I am sorry to say, that those who, when I was cheerful and lively, sought my society with avidity, now, when I actually needed conversation, were too busy to grant it. Our college examination was then approaching, and I perceived with anguish that I had read for the university scholarship, until I had barely time to get up our private subjects, and that as I was now too ill to read, all hope of getting through the examination with decent respectability was at an end. This was an additional grief. I went to our tutor, with tears in my eyes, and told him I must absent myself from the examination—a step which would have precluded me from a station amongst the prize men until the second year. He earnestly entreated me to run the risk. My surgeon gave me strong stimulants and

supporting medicines during the examination week, and I passed, I believe, one of the most respectable examinations amongst them. As soon as ever it was over, I left Cambridge, by the advice of my surgeon and tutor, and I feel myself now pretty strong. I have given up the thought of sitting for the university scholarship in consequence of my illness, as the course of my reading was effectually broken. In this place I have been much amused, and have been received with an attention in the literary circles which I neither expected nor deserved. But this does not affect me as it once would have done: my views are widely altered; and I hope that I shall in time learn to lay my whole heart at the foot of the cross.

I have only one thing more to tell you of about my illness; it is, that I have found in a young man, with whom I had a little acquaintance, that kind care and attention, which I looked for in vain from those who professed themselves my nearest friends. At a time when \* \* \* could not find leisure to devote a single evening to his sick friend, even when he earnestly implored it, William Leeson constantly, and even against my wishes, devoted *every* evening to the relieving of my melancholy, and the enlivening of my solitary hours. With the most constant and affectionate assiduity, he gave me my medicines, administered consolation to my broken spirits, and even put me to bed.

\*

\*

\*

TO MR P. THOMSON

London, 1st January, 1806

Sir,

I OWE it both to my feelings and my duty, that I should thank you for the kind inquiries you have thought it worth while to make concerning me and my affairs. I have just learned the purport of a letter received from you by Mr Robinson, the bookseller; and it is a pleasing task to me, at the same time that I express my sense of your benevolent concern in my behalf, to give you, myself, the information you require.

The little volume which, considered as the production of a very young man, may have interested you, has not had a very great sale, although it may have had as much countenance as it deserved. The last report I received from the publishers, was 450 sold. So far it has answered the expectations I had formed from it, that it has procured me the acquaintance, and, perhaps, I may say, the friendship of men equally estimable for their talents and their virtues. Rewarded by their countenance, I am by no means dissatisfied with my little book; indeed I think its merits have, on the whole, rather been over-rated than otherwise, which I attributed to the lenity so readily afforded to the faults of youth, and to the promptitude with which benevolent minds give

encouragement where encouragement seems to be wanted.

With regard to my personal concerns, I have succeeded in placing myself at Cambridge, and have already kept one term. My College is St John's, where, in the rank of Sizar, I shall probably be enabled to live almost independently of external support: but should I need that support, I have it in my power to draw on a friend, whose name I am not permitted to mention, for any sum not exceeding 30*l.* per annum. With habits of frugality, I shall never need this sum: so that I am quite at ease with respect to my college expenses, and am at full leisure to pursue my studies with a free and vacant mind.

I am at present in the great city, where I have come, in consequence of a little injudicious application, a suitor to health, variety, and amusement. In a few days I shall return to Cambridge, where (should you ever pass that way) I hope you will not forget that I reside there three-fourths of the year. It would, indeed, give me pleasure to say personally how much I am obliged by your inquiries.

I hope you will put a favourable construction both on the minuteness and the length of this letter, and permit me to subscribe myself, sir, very thankfully and obediently yours,

H. K. WHITE

## TO MR B. MADDOCK

St John's, 17th February, 1806

Dear Ben,

\* \* \*

Do not think I am reading hard : I believe it is all over with that. I have had a recurrence of my old complaint within this last four or five days, which has half unnerved me for everything. The state of my health is really miserable ; I am well and lively in the morning, and overwhelmed with nervous horrors in the evening. I do not know how to proceed with regard to my studies :—a very slight over-stretch of the mind in the day-time occasions me not only a sleepless night, but a night of *gloom* and horror. The systole and diastole of my heart seem to be playing at ball—the stake, my life. I can only say the game is not yet decided : I allude to the violence of the palpitation.

I am going to mount the Gog-magog hills this morning, in quest of a good night's sleep. The Gog-magog hills for my body, and the Bible for my mind, are my only medicines. I am sorry to say, that neither are quite adequate. *Cui, igitur ; dandum est vitio ! Mihi prorsus.* I hope, as the summer comes, my spirits (which have been with the swallows a winter's journey) will come with it. When my spirits are restored, my health will be restored :—the *fons mali* lies there. Give me serenity and equality of mind, and all will be well there.

\* \* \*

TO MR P. THOMSON

Nottingham, 8th April, 1806

Dear Sir,

I SINCERELY beg your pardon for my ungrateful disregard of your polite letter. The intervening period has been so much taken up, on the one hand, by ill health, and on the other by occupations of the most indispensable kind, that I have neglected almost all my friends, and you amongst the rest. I am now at Nottingham, a truant from study, and a rejected votary at the shrine of Health; a few days will bring me back to the margin of the Cam, and bury me once more in the busy routine of college exercises. Before, however, I am again a man of bustle and occupation, I snatch a few moments to tell you how much I shall be gratified by your correspondence, and how greatly I think myself flattered by your esteeming mine worth asking for.

The little sketch of your past occupations and present pursuits interested me. Cultivate, with all assiduity, the taste for letters which you possess. It will be a source of exquisite gratification to you: and if directed as it ought to be, and I hope as it will be directed, it will be more than gratification, (if we understand pleasure alone by that word), since it will combine with it utility of the highest kind. If polite letters were merely instrumental in cheering the hours of elegant leisure, in affording refined

and polished pleasures, uncontaminated with gross and sensual gratifications, they would still be valuable ; but in a degree infinitely less than when they are considered as the handmaids of the virtues, the correctors as well as the adorners of society. But literature has, of late years, been prostituted to all the purposes of the bagnio. Poetry, in particular, arrayed in her most bewitching colours, has been taught to exercise the arts of the *Leno*, and to charm only that she may destroy. The Muse, who once dipped her hardy wing in the chastest dews of Castalia, and spoke nothing but what had a tendency to confirm and invigorate the manly ardour of a virtuous mind, now breathes only the voluptuous languishings of the harlot, and, like the brood of Circe, touches her charmed chords with a grace, that while it ravishes the ear, deludes and beguiles the sense. I call to witness Mr Moore, and the tribe of imitators which his success has called forth, that my statement is true. Lord Strangford has trodden faithfully in the steps of his pattern.

\* \* \*

I hope, for the credit of poetry, that the good sense of the age will scout this insidious school ; and what may we not expect, if Moore and Lord Strangford apply themselves to a chaster muse?—They are both men of uncommon powers. You may remember the reign of Darwinian poetry, and the fopperies of Della Crusca. To these succeeded the school of *Simplicity*, in which Wordsworth, Southey, and Coleridge are so deservedly eminent. I think that

the new tribe of poets endeavour to combine these two opposite sects, and to unite richness of language, and warmth of colouring, with simplicity and pathos. They have certainly succeeded ; but Moore unhappily wished to be a Catullus, and from him has sprung the licentiousness of the new school. Moore's poems and his translations will, I think, have more influence on the female society of this kingdom, than the stage has had in its *worst period*, the reign of Charles II. Ladies are not ashamed of having the delectable Mr Little on their toilet, which is a pretty good proof that his voluptuousness is considered as quite veiled by the sentimental garb in which it is clad. But voluptuousness is not the less dangerous for having some slight resemblance of the veil of modesty. On the contrary, her fascinations are infinitely more powerful in this retiring habit, than when she boldly protrudes herself on the gazer's eye, and openly solicits his attention. The broad indecency of Wycherly, and his contemporaries, was not half so dangerous as this *insinuating* and *half-covered* mock-delicacy, which makes use of the blush of modesty in order to heighten the charms of vice.

I must conclude somewhat abruptly, by begging you will not punish my negligence towards you by retarding the pleasure I shall receive from your answer. I am, very truly yours,

H. K. WHITE

Address to me, St John's College, Cambridge.

## TO HIS SISTER

St John's, 25th June, 1806

My Dear Sister,

\* \* \*

THE intelligence you gave me of Mr Forest's illness, &c., &c., cannot affect me in any way whatever. The mastership of the school must be held by a *clergyman*; and I very well recollect that he is restrained from holding any curacy, or other ministerial office. The salary is not so large as you mention: and if it were, the place would scarcely be an object to me: for I am very certain, that if I choose, when I have taken my degree, I may have half-a-dozen pupils to prepare for the university, with a salary of 100*l.* per annum, which would be more respectable, and more consonant to my habits and studies, than drilling the fry of a trading town, in learning which they do not know how to value. Latin and Greek are nothing like so much respected in Nottingham as Wingate's Arithmetic.

\* \* \*

It is well for you that you can still enjoy the privilege of sitting under the sound of the Gospel: and the wants of others, in these respects, will, perhaps, teach you how to value the blessing. All our comforts, and almost all our hopes here, lie at the mercy of every succeeding hour. Death is always at hand to bereave us of some dear connexion, or

to snatch us away from those who may need our counsel and protection. I do not see how any person, capable of reflection, can live easily and fearlessly in these circumstances, unless he have a well-grounded confidence in the providing care of the Almighty, and a strong belief that his hand is in every event, and that it is a hand of mercy. The chances and changes of mortal life are so many and various, that a person cannot possibly fortify himself against the contingencies of futurity without some such hold as this, on which to repose amidst the contending gales of doubt and apprehension. This I say as affecting the present life:—our views of the future can never be *secure*, they can never be comfortable or calm, without a solid faith in the Redeemer. Men may reason about the divine benevolence, the certainty of a future state, and the probable means of propitiating the Great Judge, but their speculations will only entangle them in the mazes of doubt, perplexity, and alarm, unless they found their hopes on that basis which shall outstand the tide of ages. If we take this away, the poor bark of mortality loses its only stay, and we steer at random, we know not how, we know not whither. The religion of Jesus Christ is strength to the weak, and wisdom to the unwise. It requires no preparative of learning nor study, but is, if possible, more obvious and easy to the illiterate than to the erudite. No man, therefore, has any excuse if he neglect it. The way is plain before him, and he is invited to enter. He has only to kneel

at the foot of the cross, and cry, with the poor publican, 'Lord have mercy upon me, a miserable sinner.' If he do this, and examine his own heart, and mortify the body of sin within him, as far as he is able, humbly and earnestly imploring the assistance of God's holy Spirit, we cannot doubt but he will meet with the approbation and assistance of the Almighty. In this path we must all tread. In this path I hope that you, my dear sister, are now proceeding. You have children; to whom can you commit them, should Providence call you hence, with more confidence than the meek and benevolent Jesus? What legacy can you leave them more certainly profitable, than the prayers of a pious mother? And if, taught by your example, as well as by your instructions, they should become themselves patterns of a holy and religious life, how sweetly will the evening of your days shine upon your head, as you behold them treading in those ways which you know, by experience, to be ways of pleasantness and peace! I need not press this subject. I know you feel all that I say, and more than I can express. I only fear that the bustle of family cares, as well as many anxieties of mind on other accounts, should too much divert you from these important objects. Let me only remind you, that the prayers of the afflicted are particularly acceptable to God. The sigh of the penitent is not too light to reach his ear. The eye of God is fixed as intently upon your soul at all times, as it is upon the revolution of the heavenly bodies and the regulation of systems.

God surveys all things, and he contemplates them with perfect attention ; and, consequently, he is as intently conversant about the smallest as about the greatest things. For if he were not as perfectly intent on the soul of an individual being as he is about the general concerns of the universe, then he would do one thing less perfectly than another : which is impossible in God.

\*                      \*                      \*

## TO HIS BROTHER NEVILLE

St John's, 30th June, 1806

Dear Neville,

I RECEIVED your letter yesterday ; and I hope you will not think my past silence at all in need of apology, when you know that our examination only closed on Saturday.

I have the satisfaction of informing you, that after a week's scrutiny, I was deemed to be the first man. I had very little hopes of arriving at so distinguishing a station, on account of my many checks and interruptions. It gave me great pleasure to observe how all the men rejoiced in my success. It was on Monday that the classes were published. I am a prize-man both in the mathematical and logical, or general examination, and in Latin composition.

Mr Catton has expressed his great satisfaction at my progress : and he has offered to supply me with a private tutor for the four months of the vacation,

free of any expense. This will cost the college twelve or fifteen guineas at least. My last term bill amounts only to 4*l.*, 5*s.* 3*d.* after my exhibitions are deducted.

I had engaged to take charge of a few classical pupils, for a clergyman in Warwickshire, during *one* month of the vacation, for which I was to receive, besides my board, &c. &c. ten guineas; but Mr Catton says this is a piece of extreme folly, as it will consume time, and do me no good. He told me, therefore, positively, that he would not give me an *exeat*, without which no man can leave his college for the night.

I cannot, therefore, at all events, visit Nottingham with my aunt, nor meet her there.

I could now, if I chose, leave St John's College, and go to another with great *eclat*; but it would be an unadvisable step. I believe, however, it will be impossible for them to elect me a fellow at St John's, as my county is under particular restrictions. They can give me a fellowship of smaller value, but I had rather get one at another college: at all events, the smaller colleges will be glad to elect me from St John's.

\* \* \*

With regard to cash, I manage pretty well, though my fund is at present at its lowest ebb. My bills, however, are paid; and I have no occasion for money, except as a private convenience. The question therefore is, whether it will be more inconvenient to you than convenient to me for you

to replenish my purse. Decide impartially. I have not drawn upon my mother since Christmas, except for the expense of my journey up from Nottingham to Cambridge; nor do I mean to do it till next Christmas, when, as I have ordered a suit of clothes, I shall have a good many calls for money.

Let me have a long letter from you soon.

\* \* \*

## TO HIS MOTHER

St John's, 9th July, 1806

My Dear Mother,

I HAVE scarcely time to write you a long letter; but the pleasing nature of my intelligence will, I hope, make up for its shortness.

After a week's examination, I am decided to be the first man of my year at St John's: an honour I had scarcely hoped for, since my reading has been so very broken and interrupted. The contest was very stiff, and the men all acquitted themselves very well. We had thirteen men in the *first class*, though there are seldom more than six or eight who attain that rank in common.

I have learned also, that I am a prize-man in classical composition, though I do not yet know whereabouts I stand. It is reported that here too I am first.

Before it was known that I was the first man, Mr Catton, our college tutor, told me that he was

so satisfied with the manner in which I had passed through the examination, that if I chose to stay up during the summer, I should have a private tutor in the mathematics, and that it should be no expense to me. I could not hesitate at such a proposal, especially as he did not limit the time for my keeping the private tutor, but will probably continue it as long as I like. You may estimate the value of this favour, when I tell you that a private tutor, for the whole vacation, will cost the college at least twelve or fourteen guineas, and that during term time they receive ten guineas the term.

I cannot of course leave the college this summer even for a week, and shall therefore miss the pleasure of seeing my aunt G—— at Nottingham. I have written to her.

It gave me much pleasure to observe the joy all the men seemed to feel at my success. I had been on a water excursion, with a clergyman in the neighbourhood, and some ladies, and just got home as the men were assembling for supper; you can hardly conceive with what pleasure they all flocked round me, with the most hearty congratulations, and I found that many of them had been seeking me all over the college, in order to be the first to communicate the good tidings.

\* \* \*

TO MR B. MADDOCK

St John's, July, 1806

My Dear Friend,

I HAVE good and very bad news to communicate to you. Good, that Mr Catton has given me an exhibition, which makes me up a clear income of 63*l.* per annum, and that I am consequently more than independent; bad, that I have been very ill, notwithstanding regular and steady exercise. Last Saturday morning I rose early, and got up some rather abstruse problems in mechanics for my tutor, spent an hour with him, between eight and nine got my breakfast, and read the Greek History (*at breakfast*) till ten, then sat down to decipher some logarithm tables. I think I had not done anything at them, when I lost myself. At a quarter past eleven my laundress found me bleeding in four different places in my face and head, and insensible. I got up, and staggered about the room, and she, being frightened, ran away, and told my Gyp to fetch a surgeon. Before he came, I was sallying out with my flannel gown on, and my academical gown over it: he made me put on my coat, and then I went to Mr Farish's: he opened a vein, and my recollection returned. My own idea was, that I had fallen out of bed, and so I told Mr Farish at first; but I afterwards remembered that I had been to Mr Fiske, and breakfasted.

Mr Catton has insisted on my consulting Sir Isaac Pennington, and the consequence is, that I am to go through a course of blistering, &c. which, after the bleeding, will leave me weak enough.

I am, however, very well, except as regards the doctors; and yesterday I drove into the country to Saffron Walden in a gig. My tongue is in a bad condition, from a bite which I gave it either in my fall, or in the moments of convulsion. My nose has also come badly off. I believe I fell against my reading desk. My other wounds are only rubs and scratches on the carpet.

I am ordered to remit my studies for awhile, by the common advice both of doctors and tutors. Dr Pennington hopes to prevent any recurrence of the fit. He thinks it looks towards epilepsy, of the horrors of which malady I have a very full and precise idea; and I only pray that God will spare me as respects my faculties, however else it may seem good to him to afflict me. Were I my own master, I know how I should act; but I am tied here by bands which I cannot burst. I know that change of place is needful; but I must not indulge in the idea. The college must not pay my tutor for nothing. Dr Pennington and Mr Farish attribute the attack to a too continued tension of the faculties. As I am much alone now, I never get quite off study, and I think incessantly. I know nature will not endure this. They both proposed my going home, but Mr \* \* did not hint at it, although much concerned; and, indeed, I know home would be a bad place for

me *in my* present situation. I look round for a resting place, and I find none. Yet there is one, which I have long too, too much disregarded, and thither I must now betake myself. There are many situations worse than mine, and I have no business to complain. If these afflictions should draw the bonds tighter which hold me to my Redeemer, it will be well.

You may be assured that you have here a plain statement of my case, in its true colours, without any palliation. I am now well again, and have only to fear a relapse, which I shall do all I can to prevent, by a relaxation in study. I have now written too much. I am very sincerely yours,

H. K. WHITE

P. S. I charge you, as you value my peace, not to let my friends hear, either directly or indirectly of my illness.

## TO HIS MOTHER

St John's, August, 1806

My Dear Mother,

I HAVE no hesitation in declining the free school, on the ground of its precluding the exercise of the ministerial duties. I shall take the liberty of writing Mr—— to thank him for having thought of me, and to recommend to his notice Mr ——.

\* \* \*

But do not fret yourself, my dear mother ; in a few years we shall, I hope, be in happier circumstances. I am not too sanguine in my expectations, but I shall certainly be able to assist you, and my sisters, in a few years. \* \* \* \*. As for Maria and Kate, if they succeed well in their education, they may, perhaps, be able to keep a school of a superior kind, where the profits will be greater, and the labour less. I even hope that this may not be necessary, and that you, my father and they, may come and live with me when I get a parsonage. You would be pleased to see how comfortably Mr — lives with his mother and sisters, at a snug little rectory about ten miles from Cambridge. So much for castle-building.

\* \* \*

## TO HIS BROTHER NEVILLE

St John's, 12th August, 1806

Dear Neville,

I CAN but just manage to tell you, by this post, what I am sure you will be glad to learn, even at the expense of seven-pence for an empty sheet, that Mr Catton has given me an exhibition, which makes my whole income sixty guineas a year. My last term's bill was 13*l.*, 13*s.*, and I had 7*l.*, 12*s.* to receive ; but the expenses of this vacation will leave me bare until Christmas.

I have the pleasure of not having solicited either

this or any other of the favours which Mr Catton has so liberally bestowed upon me: and though I have been the possessor of this exhibition ever since March last, yet Mr Catton did not hint it to me until this morning, when he gave me my bill.

I have, of course, signified to Mr Simeon, that I shall have no need whatever of the stipend which I have hitherto received through his hands. He was extremely kind on the occasion, and indeed his conduct towards me has ever been *fatherly*. It was Mr \* \* \* who allowed me 20*l.* per annum, and Mr Simeon added 10*l.* He told me, that my conduct gave him the most heartfelt joy; that I was so generally respected, without having made any compliances, as he understood, or having, in any instance, concealed my principles. Indeed, this is a praise which I may claim, though I never conceived that it was at all an object of praise. I have always taken some pains to let those around me know my religious sentiments, as a saving of trouble, and as a mark of that independence of opinion, which, I think, every one ought to assert: and as I have produced my opinions with frankness and modesty, and supported them (if attacked) with coolness and candour, I have never found them any impediment to my acquaintance with any person whose acquaintance I coveted.

TO MR B. MADDOCK

St John's, Cambridge, 22nd September, 1806

My Dear Friend,

\* \* \*

YOU charge me with an accession of gallantry of late ; I plead guilty. I really began to think of marriage (very prematurely, you'll say) ; but if I experience any repetition of *the fit*, I shall drop the idea of it forever. It would be folly and cruelty to involve another in all the horrors of such a calamity.

I thank you for your kind exhortations to a complete surrender of my heart to God, which are contained in your letter. In this respect I have betrayed the most deplorable weakness and indecision of character. I know what the truth is, and I love it ; but I still go on giving myself half to God, and half to the world, as if I expected to enjoy the comforts of religion along with the vanities of life. If, for a short time, I keep up a closer communion with God, and feel my whole bosom bursting with sorrow and tenderness as I approach the foot-stool of my Saviour, I soon relapse into indifference, worldly - mindedness, and sin ; my devotions become listless and perfunctory : I dote on the world, its toys, and its corruptions, and am mad enough to be willing to sacrifice the happiness of eternity to the deceitful pleasures of the passing

moment. My heart is indeed a lamentable sink of loathsome corruption and hypocrisy. In consistency with my professed opinions, I am often obliged to talk on subjects of which I know but little in experience, and to rank myself with those who have felt, what I only approve from my head, and, perhaps, esteem from my heart. I often start with horror and disgust from myself, when I consider how deeply I have imperceptibly gone into this species of simulation. Yet I think my love for the Gospel, and its professors, is sincere; only I am insincere in suffering persons to entertain a high opinion of me as a child of God, when indeed I am an alien from him. On looking over some private memorandums, which were written at various times in the course of the two last years, I beheld, with inexpressible anguish, that my progress has, if anything, been retrograde. I am still as dark, still as cold, still as ignorant, still as fond of the world, and have still fewer desires after holiness. I am very, very dissatisfied with myself, and yet I am not prompted to earnest prayer. I have been so often earnest, and always have fallen away, that I go to God without hope, without faith. Yet I am not *totally* without hope; I know God will have my whole heart, and I know, when I give him *that*, I shall experience the light of his countenance with a permanency. I pray that he would assist my weakness, and grant me some portion of his grace, in order that I may overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil, to which  
 • have long, very long, been a willing, though an

unhappy slave. Do you pray earnestly with me, and for me, in these respects; I know the prayers of the faithful avail much; and when you consider with what great temptations I am surrounded, and how very little strength I have wherewith to resist them, you will feel with me the necessity of earnest supplication, and fervent intercession, lest I should be lost, and cast away forever.

I shall gladly receive your spiritual advice and directions. I have gone on *too* long in coldness and unconcern; who knows whether, if I neglect the present hour, the day of salvation may not be gone by forever!!

\* \* \*

## TO MR JOHN CHARLESWORTH

St John's, 22nd September, 1806

My Dear Charlesworth,

THANK you for taking the blame of our neglected correspondence on your own shoulders, I thought it rested elsewhere. Thrice have I begun to write to you; once in Latin, and twice in English; and each time have the fates opposed themselves to the completion of my design. But, however, *pax sit rebus*, we are naturally disposed to forgive, because we are, as far as intention goes, mutual offenders.

I thank you for your invitation to Clapham, which came at a fortunate juncture, since I had just settled

with my tutor that I should pay a visit to my brother in London this week. I shall of course see you; and shall be happy to spend a few days with you at Clapham and to rhapsodize on your common. It gives me pleasure to hear you are settled, and I give you many hearty good wishes for practice and prosperity. I hope you will soon find that a wife is a very necessary article of enjoyment in a domesticated state; for how indeed should it be otherwise? A man cannot cook his dinner while he is employed in earning it. Housekeepers are complete *helluones rei familiaris*, and not only pick your pockets, but abuse you into the bargain. While a wife, on the contrary, both cooks your dinner, and enlivens it with her society; receives you after the toils of the day with cheerfulness and smiles, and is not only the faithful guardian of your treasury, but the soother of your cares, and the alleviator of your calamities. Now, am I not very poetical? But on such a subject who would not be poetical? A wife! —a domestic fire-side;—the cheerful assiduities of love and tenderness! It would inspire a Dutch burgomaster; and if, with all this in your grasp, you shall still choose the *pulsare terram pede libero*, still avoid the *irrupta copula*, still deem it a matter of light regard to be an object of affection and fondness to an amiable and sensible woman, why then you deserve to be a fellow of a college all your days; to be kicked about in your last illness by a saucy and careless bed-maker; and, lastly, to be put in the ground in your college chapel, followed

only by the man who is to be your successor. Why, man, I dare no more *dream* that I shall ever have it in my power to have a wife, than that I shall be Archbishop of Canterbury, and Primate of all England. A suite of rooms in a still and quiet corner of old St John's, which was once occupied by a crazy monk, or by one of the translators of the Bible in the days of good King James, must form the boundary of my ambition. I must be content to inhabit walls which never echoed with a female voice, to be buried in glooms which were never cheered with a female smile. It is said, indeed, that women were sometimes permitted to visit St John's when it was a monastery of White-Friars, in order to be present at particular religious ceremonies ; but the good monks were careful to sprinkle holy water wherever their profane footsteps had carried contagion and pollution.

It is well that you are free from the restrictions of monastic austerity, and that, while I sleep under the shadow of towers and lofty walls, and the safeguard of a vigilant porter, you are permitted to inhabit your own cottage, under your own guardianship, and to listen to the sweet accents of domestic affection.

Yes, my very Platonic, or rather Stoical friend, I must see you safely bound in the matrimonial noose, and then, like a confirmed bachelor, ten years hence, I shall have the satisfaction of pretending to laugh at, while, in my heart, I envy you. So much for rhapsody. I am coming to London for relaxation's sake, and shall take it pretty freely ; that is, I shall

seek after fine sights—stare at fine people—be cheerful with the gay—foolish with the simple—and leave as little room to suspect as possible that I am (anything of) a philosopher and mathematician. I shall probably talk a little Greek, but it will be by stealth, in order to excite no suspicion.

I shall be in town on Friday or Saturday. I am in a very idle mood, and have written you a very idle letter, for which I entreat your pardon: and I am, dear C——, very sincerely yours,

H. K. WHITE

### TO HIS BROTHER NEVILLE

(FOUND IN HIS POCKET AFTER HIS DECEASE)

St John's College, Saturday, 11th October, 1806

Dear Neville,

I AM safely arrived, and in college, but my illness has increased upon me much. The cough continues, and is attended with a good deal of fever. I am under the care of Mr Farish, and entertain very little apprehension about the cough; but my over-exertions in town have reduced me to a state of much debility; and, until the cough be gone I cannot be permitted to take any strengthening medicines. This places me in an awkward predicament; but I think I perceive a degree of expectoration this morning, which will soon relieve me, and then I shall mend apace.

Under these circumstances, I must not expect to see you here at present: when I am a little recovered, it will be a pleasant relaxation to me.

\* \* \*

Our lectures began on Friday, but I do not attend them until I am better. I have not written to my mother, nor shall I while I remain unwell. You will tell her, as a reason, that our lectures began on Friday. I know she will be uneasy, if she do not hear from me, and still more so, if I tell her I am ill.

I cannot write more at present, than that I am your truly affectionate brother,

H. K. WHITE

### A PRAYER

ALMIGHTY Father, at the close of another day I kneel before thee in supplication, and ere I compose my body to sleep, I would steal a few moments from weariness, to lift up my thoughts to thy perfections, to meditate on thy wonderful dispensations, and to make my request known unto thee.

Although the hours of this day have not been spent in the busy haunts of society, but in the pursuit of needful and godly knowledge, yet I am conscious that my thoughts and actions have been far from pure; and many vain and foolish speculations, many sinful thoughts and ambitious anticipa-

tions, have obtruded themselves on my mind. I know that I have felt pleasure in what I ought to have abhorred, and that I have not had thy presence continually in mind ; so that my ghostly enemy has mixed poison with my best food, and sowed tares with the good seed of instruction. Sometimes, too, the world has had too much to do with my thoughts ; I have longed for its pleasures, its splendours, its honours, and have forgotten that I am a poor follower of Jesus Christ, whose inheritance is not in this land, but in the fields above. I do therefore supplicate and beseech thee, Oh ! thou my God and Father, that thou wilt not only forgive these my wanderings, but that thou wilt chasten my heart, and establish my affections, so that they may not be shaken by the light suggestions of the tempter Satan ; and since I am of myself very weak, I implore thy restraining hand upon my understanding, that I may not reason in the pride of worldly wisdom, nor flatter myself on my attainments, but ever hold my judgment in subordination to thy word, and see myself as what I am, a helpless dependant on thy bounty. If a spirit of indolence and lassitude have at times crept on me, I pray thy forgiveness for it ; and if I have felt rather inclined to prosecute studies which procure respect from the world, than the humble knowledge which becomes a servant of Christ, do thou check this growing propensity, and only bless my studies so far as they conduce to thy glory, and as thy glory is their chief end. My heart, O Lord ! is but too fond of this vain and

deceitful world, and I have many fears lest I should make shipwreck of my hope on the rocks of ambition and vanity. Give me, I pray thee, thy grace to repress these propensities : illumine more completely my wandering mind, rectify my understanding, and give me a simple, humble, and affectionate heart, to love thee and thy sheep with all sincerity. As I increase in learning, let me increase in lowliness of spirit : and inasmuch as the habits of studious life, unless tempered by preventing grace, but too much tend to produce formality and lifelessness in devotion, do thou, O heavenly Father, preserve me from all cold and speculative views of thy blessed Gospel ; and while with regular constancy I kneel down daily before thee, do not fail to light up the fire of heavenly love in my bosom, and to draw my heart heavenward with earnest longing [to thyself].

And now, O Blessed Redeemer ! my rock, my hope, and only sure defence, to thee do I cheerfully commit both my soul and my body. If thy wise Providence see fit, grant that I may rise in the morning, refreshed with sleep, and with a spirit of cheerful activity for the duties of the day : but whether I wake here or in eternity, grant that my trust in thee may remain sure, and my hope unshaken. Our Father, etc.

22nd September, 1806

Mem.

ON running over the pages of this book, I am constrained to observe, with sorrow and shame, that my progress in divine light has been little or none.

I have made a few conquests over my corrupt inclinations, but my heart still hankers after its old delights; still lingers half willing, half unwilling, in the ways of worldly-mindedness.

My knowledge of divine things is very little improved. I have read less of the Scriptures than I did last year. In reading the Fathers, I have consulted rather the pride of my heart than my spiritual good.

I now turn to the cause of these evils, and I find that the great root, the main-spring, is—love of the world; next to that, pride; next to that, spiritual sloth.

## REMARKS ON THE ENGLISH POETS

## IMITATIONS

THE sublimity and unaffected beauty of the sacred writings are in no instance more conspicuous, than in the following verses of the xviii<sup>th</sup> Psalm!

‘He bowed the heavens also and came down :  
and darkness was under his feet.

‘And he rode upon a cherub and did fly: yea, he did fly upon the wings of the wind.’

None of our better versions have been able to preserve the original graces of these verses. That wretched one of Thomas Sternhold, however, (which, to the disgrace and manifest detriment of religious worship, is generally used,) has in this solitary instance, and then perhaps by accident, given us the true spirit of the Psalmist, and has surpassed not only Merrick, but even the classic Buchanan. This version is as follows :

The Lord descended from above,  
And bowed the heavens high,  
And underneath his feet he cast  
The darkness of the sky.

On cherubs and on cherubims  
Full royally he rode,  
And on the wings of mighty winds  
Came flying all abroad.

Dryden honoured these verses with very high commendation, and, in the following lines of his *Annus Mirabilis*, has apparently imitated them, in preference to the original :

The duke less numerous, but in courage more,  
On wings of all the winds to combat flies.

And in his *Ceyx* and *Alcyone*, from Ovid, he has :

And now sublime she rides upon the wind.

which is probably imitated, as well as most of the

following, not from Sternhold, but the original.  
Thus Pope :

Not God alone in the still calm we find,  
He mounts the storm and rides upon the wind.

And Addison :

Rides in the whirlwind and directs the storm.

The unfortunate Chatterton has :

And rides upon the pinions of the wind.

And Gray :

With arms sublime that float upon the air.

Few poets of eminence have less incurred the charge of plagiarism than Milton; yet many instances might be adduced of similarity of idea and language with the Scripture, which are certainly more than coincidences, and some of these I shall, in a future number, present to your readers. Thus the present passage in the Psalmist was in all probability in his mind when he wrote :

And with mighty wings outspread,  
Dove-like sat'st brooding on the vast abyss.  
*Par. Lost*, B. I, l. 20.

The third verse of the civth Psalm :

He maketh the clouds his chariot, and walketh upon the  
wings of the wind,

is evidently taken from the before-mentioned verses in the xviiiith Psalm, on which it is perhaps an improvement. It has also been imitated by two of

our first poets—Shakespeare and Thomson. The former in *Romeo and Juliet* :

Bestrides the lazy-paced clouds,  
And sails upon the bosom of the air.

The latter in *Winter*, l. 199 :

Till Nature's King, who oft  
Amid tempestuous darkness dwells alone,  
And on the wings of the careering winds  
Walks dreadfully serene.

As these imitations have not before, I believe, been noticed, they cannot fail to interest the lovers of polite letters ; and they are such as at least will amuse your readers in general. If the sacred writings were attentively perused, we should find innumerable passages from which our best modern poets have drawn their most admired ideas : and the enumerations of these instances would perhaps attract the attention of many persons to those volumes, which they now perhaps think to contain everything tedious and disgusting, but which, on the contrary, they would find replete with interest, beauty, and true sublimity.

STERNHOLD AND HOPKINS

Mr Editor,

IN your *Mirror* for July, a Mr William Toone has offered a few observations on a paper of mine, in a preceding number, containing remarks on the

versions and imitations of the 9th and 10th verses of the xviiiith Psalm, to which I think it necessary to offer a few words by way of reply; as they not only put an erroneous construction on certain passages of that paper, but are otherwise open to material objection.

The object of Mr Toone, in some parts of his observations, appears to have been to refute something which he *fancied* I had advanced, tending to establish the general merit of Sternhold and Hopkins's translation of the Psalms: but he might have saved himself this unnecessary trouble, as I have decidedly condemned it as mere doggerel, still preserved in our churches, to the detriment of religion; and the version of the passage in question is adduced as a brilliant, though probably accidental, exception to the general character of the work. What necessity, therefore, your correspondent could see for '*hoping that I should think with him, that the sooner the old version of the Psalms was consigned to oblivion, the better it would be for rational devotion,*' I am perfectly at a loss to imagine.

This concluding sentence of Mr Toone's paper, which I consider as introduced merely by way of rounding the period, and making a graceful exit, needs no further animadversion. I shall therefore proceed to examine the objections of the 'worthy clergyman of the church of England' to these verses, cited by your correspondent, by which he hopes to prove, Dryden, Knox, and the numerous other eminent men who have expressed their admiration

thereof, to be little better than idiots.—The first is this:

‘*Cherubim* is the plural for *Cherub*; but our versioner by adding an *s* to it, has rendered them both plurals.’ By adding an *s* to what? If the pronoun *it* refer to cherubim, as according to the construction of the sentence it really does, the whole objection is nonsense.—But the worthy gentleman, no doubt, *meant* to say, that Sternhold had rendered them both plurals by the addition of an *s* to *cherub*. Even in this sense, however, I conceive the charge to be easily obviated; for, though cherubim is doubtless usually considered as the plural of cherub, yet the two words are frequently so used in the Old Testament as to prove, that they were often applied to separate ranks of beings. One of these, which I shall cite, will dispel all doubt on the subject.

‘And within the oracle he made *two cherubims* of olive tree, *each* ten cubits high.’ 1 *Kings*, v. 23, ch. vi.

The other objection turns upon a word with which it is not necessary for me to interfere; for I did not quote these verses as instances of the merit of Sternhold, or his version, I only asserted that the lines which I then copied, viz.

The Lord descended from above, etc.

were truly noble and sublime. Whether, therefore, Sternhold wrote *all the winds* (as asserted by your correspondent, in order to furnish room for objec-

tion,) or *mighty winds*, is of no import. But if this really be a subsequent alteration, I think at least there is no improvement; for when we conceive the winds as assembling from all quarters, at the omnipotent command of the Deity, and bearing him with their united forces from the heavens, we have a more sublime image than when we see him as flying merely on *mighty winds*, or as driving his team (or troop) of angels on a *strong* tempest's *rapid* wing, with *most amazing swiftness*, as *elegantly* represented by *Brady and Tate*<sup>1</sup>.

I differ from your correspondent's opinion, that these verses, so far from possessing sublimity, attract the reader merely by their *rumbling sound*: And here it may not be amiss to observe, that the true sublime does not consist of high sounding words, or pompous magnificence; on the contrary, it most frequently appears clad in native dignity and simplicity, without art, and without ornament.

The most elegant critic of antiquity, Longinus, in his *Treatise on the Sublime*, adduces the follow-

<sup>1</sup> How any man, enjoying the use of his senses, could prefer the contemptible version of Brady and Tate of this verse to Sternhold's, is to me inexplicable. The epithets which are introduced would have disgraced a school-boy, and the majestic imagery of the original is sacrificed to make room for tinsel and fustian.

The chariot of the king of kings,  
Which active troops of angels drew,  
On a strong tempest's rapid wings,  
With most amazing swiftness flew.

ing passage from the Book of Genesis, as possessing that quality in an eminent degree :

' God said, *Let there be light, and there was light:—  
Let the earth be, and earth was.*'<sup>1</sup>

From what I have advanced on this subject, I would not have it inferred, that I conceive the version of Sternhold and Hopkins, generally speaking, to be superior to that of Brady and Tate ; for, on the contrary, in almost every instance, except that above mentioned, the latter possesses an indubitable right to pre-eminence. Our language, however, cannot yet boast one version possessing the true spirit of the original ; some are beneath contempt, and the best has scarcely attained mediocrity. Your correspondent has quoted some verses from Tate, in triumph, as comparatively excellent ; but, in my opinion, they are also instances of our general failure in sacred poetry : they abound in those *ambitiosa ornamenta* which do well to please women and children, but which disgust the man of taste.

To the imitations already noticed of this passage, permit me to add the following :

But various Iris, Jove's commands to bear,  
Speeds on the wings of winds through liquid air.

Pope's *Iliad*, B. 2.

Miguel cruzando os pelagos do vento.

*Carlos Reduzido, Canto I*, by Pedro de Azevedo  
Tojal, an ancient Portuguese poet of some merit.

---

<sup>1</sup> The critic apparently quoted from memory, for we may search in vain for the latter part of this sentence.

## REMARKS ON THE ENGLISH POETS

WARTON

THE poems of Thomas Warton are replete with a sublimity, and richness of imagery, which seldom fail to enchant: every line presents new beauties of idea, aided by all the magic of animated diction. From the inexhaustible stores of figurative language, majesty, and sublimity, which the ancient English poets afford, he has culled some of the richest and the sweetest flowers. But, unfortunately, in thus making use of the beauties of other writers, he has been too unsparing; for the greater number of his ideas and nervous epithets cannot, strictly speaking, be called his own; therefore, however we may be charmed by the grandeur of his images, or the felicity of his expression, we must still bear in our recollection, that we cannot with justice bestow upon him the highest eulogium of genius—that of originality.

It has, with much justice, been observed, that Pope, and his imitators, have introduced a species of refinement into our language, which has banished that nerve and pathos for which Milton had rendered it eminent. Harmonious modulations, and unvarying exactness of measure, totally precluding sublimity and fire, have reduced our fashionable poetry to mere sing-song. But Thomas Warton, whose taste

was unvitiated by the frivolities of the day, immediately saw the intrinsic worth of what the world then slighted. He saw that the ancient poets contained a fund of strength, and beauty of imagery, as well as diction, which, in the hands of genius, would shine forth with redoubled lustre. Entirely rejecting, therefore, modern niceties, he extracted the honied sweets from these beautiful, though neglected flowers. Every grace of sentiment, every poetical term, which a false taste had rendered obsolete, was by him revived and made to grace his own ideas; and though many will condemn him as guilty of plagiarism, yet few will be able to withhold the tribute of their praise.

The peculiar forte of Warton seems to have been in the sombre descriptive. The wild airy flights of a Spenser, the 'chivalrous feats of barons bold', or the 'cloister'd solitude', were the favourites of his mind. Of this his bent he informs us in the following lines:

Through Pope's soft song, though all the graces breathe,  
And happiest art adorns his attic page,  
Yet does my mind with sweeter transport glow,  
As at the root of mossy trunk reclin'd,  
In magic Spenser's wildly warbled song,  
I see deserted Una wander wide  
Through wasteful solitudes and lurid heaths,  
Weary, forlorn, than where the fated fair<sup>1</sup>  
Upon the bosom bright of silver Thames,  
Launches in all the lustre of brocade,

---

<sup>1</sup> Belinda. Vide Pope's *Rape of the Lock*.

Amid the splendours of the laughing sun ;  
 The *gay description* palls upon the sense,  
 And coldly strikes the mind with feeble bliss.

*Pleasures of Melancholy.*

Warton's mind was formed for the grand and the sublime. Were his imitations less verbal, and less numerous, I should be led to imagine that the peculiar beauties of his favourite authors had sunk so impressively into his mind, that he had unwittingly appropriated them as his own ; but they are in general such as to preclude the idea.

To the metrical and other intrinsic ornaments of style, he appears to have paid due attention. If we meet with an uncouth expression, we immediately perceive that it is peculiarly appropriate, and that no other term could have been made use of with so happy an effect. His poems abound with alliterative lines. Indeed, this figure seems to have been his favourite ; and he studiously seeks every opportunity to introduce it : however, it must be acknowledged, that his 'daisy-dappled dales', &c. occur too frequently.

The poem on which Warton's fame (*as a poet*) principally rests, is, the *Pleasures of Melancholy*, and (notwithstanding the perpetual recurrence of ideas which are borrowed from other poets) there are few pieces which I have perused with more exquisite gratification. The gloomy tints with which he overcasts his descriptions ; his highly figurative language ; and, above all, the antique air which the poem wears, convey the most sublime ideas to the mind.

Of the other pieces of this poet, some are excellent, and they all rise above mediocrity. In his sonnets, he has succeeded wonderfully; that written at Winslade, and the one to the river Lodon, are peculiarly beautiful, and that to Mr Gray is most elegantly turned. The *Ode on the Approach of Summer* is replete with genius and poetic fire; and even over the *Birthday Odes*, which he wrote as poet laureate, his genius has cast energy and beauty. His humorous pieces and satires abound in wit; and, in short, taking him altogether, he is an ornament to our country and our language, and it is to be regretted, that the profusion with which he has made use of the beauties of other poets, should have given room for censure.

I should have closed my short, and, I fear, jejune essay on Warton, but that I wished to hint to your truly elegant and acute Stamford correspondent, Octavius Gilchrist, (whose future remarks on Warton's imitations I await with considerable impatience), that the passage in the *Pleasures of Melancholy*—

or ghostly shape,  
At distance seen, invites, with beck'ning hand,  
Thy lonesome steps,

which he supposes to be taken from the following in *Comus*—

Of calling shapes, and beck'ning shadows dire,  
And airy tongues that syllable men's names,

is more probably taken from the commencement of Pope's *Elegy on an Unfortunate Lady*—

What beck'ning ghost, along the moonlight shade  
Invites my steps, and points to yonder glade?

The original idea was possibly taken from *Comus* by Pope, from whom Warton, to all appearance, again borrowed it.

Were the similarity of the passage in Gray to that in Warton less striking and verbal, I should be inclined to think it only a remarkable coincidence; for Gray's biographers inform us, that he commenced his elegy in 1742, and that it was completed in 1744, being the year which he particularly devoted to the muses, though he did not '*put the finishing stroke to it*' until 1750. The *Pleasures of Melancholy* were published in 4to in 1747; therefore Gray *might* take his third stanza from Warton; but it is rather extraordinary that the *third stanza* of a poem should be taken from another, published *five* years after that poem was begun, and *three* after it was understood to be completed. One circumstance, however, seems to render the supposition of its being a plagiarism somewhat more probable, which is, that the stanza in question is not essential to the connexion of the succeeding and antecedent verses; therefore it might have been added by Gray, when he put the '*finishing stroke*' to his piece in 1750.

## CURSORY REMARKS ON TRAGEDY

THE pleasure which is derived from the representation of an affecting tragedy, has often been the subject of inquiry among philosophical critics, as a singular phenomenon.—That the mind should receive gratification from the excitement of those passions which are in themselves painful, is really an extraordinary paradox, and is the more inexplicable, since, when the same means are employed to rouse the more pleasing affections, no adequate effect is produced.

In order to solve this problem, many ingenious hypotheses have been invented. The Abbé Du Bos tells us, that the mind has such a natural antipathy to a state of listlessness and languor, as to render the transition from it to a state of exertion, even though by rousing passions in themselves painful, as in the instance of tragedy, a positive pleasure. Monsieur Fontenelle has given us a more satisfactory account. He tells us that pleasure and pain, two sentiments so different in themselves, do not differ so much in their cause; that pleasure, carried too far, becomes pain; and pain, a little moderated, becomes pleasure. Hence that the pleasure we derive from tragedy is a pleasing sorrow, a modulated pain. David Hume, who has also written upon this subject, unites the two systems, with this addition, that the painful emotions excited by the representation of

melancholy scenes, are further tempered, and the pleasure is proportionably heightened by the eloquence displayed in the relation—the art shown in collecting the pathetic circumstances, and the judgment evinced in their happy disposition.

But even now I do not conceive the difficulty to be satisfactorily done away. Admitting the postulatam which the Abbé Du Bos assumes, that languor is so disagreeable to the mind, as to render its removal positive pleasure, to be true ; yet, when we recollect, as Mr Hume has before observed, that were the same objects of distress which give us pleasure in tragedy set before our eyes in reality, though they would effectually remove listlessness, they would excite the most unfeigned uneasiness, we shall hesitate in applying this solution in its full extent to the present subject. M. Fontenelle's reasoning is much more conclusive ; yet I think he errs egregiously in his premises, if he means to imply that any modulation of pain is pleasing, because, in whatever degree it may be, it is still pain, and remote from either ease or positive pleasure ; and if, by moderated pain, he means any uneasy sensation abated, though not totally banished, he is no less mistaken in the application of them to the subject before us.—Pleasure may very well be conceived to be painful, when carried to excess, because it there becomes exertion, and is inconvenient. We may also form some idea of a pleasure arising from moderated pain, or the transition from the disagreeable to the less disagreeable ; but this cannot in any-wise be applied to

the gratification we derive from a tragedy, for there no superior degree of pain is left for an inferior. As to Mr Hume's addition of the pleasure we derive from the art of the poet, for the introduction of which he has written his whole dissertation on tragedy, it merits little consideration. The self-recollection necessary to render this art a source of gratification must weaken the illusion; and whatever weakens the illusion diminishes the effect.

In these systems it is taken for granted that all those passions are excited which are represented in the drama. This I conceive to have been the primary cause of error; for to me it seems very probable that the only passion or affection which is excited, is that of sympathy, which partakes of the pleasing nature of pity and compassion, and includes in it so much as is pleasing of hope and apprehension, joy and grief.

The pleasure we derive from the afflictions of a friend is proverbial — every person has felt, and wondered why he felt, something soothing in the participation of the sorrows of those dear to his heart; and he might with as much reason have questioned why he was delighted with the melancholy scenes of tragedy. Both pleasures are equally singular; they both arise from the same source. Both originate in sympathy.

It would seem natural that an accidental spectator of a cause in a court of justice, with which he is perfectly unacquainted, would remain an uninterested auditor of what was going forward. Experience tells

us, however, the exact contrary. He immediately, even before he is well acquainted with the merits of the case, espouses one side of the question, to which he uniformly adheres, participates in all its advantages, and sympathizes in its success. There is no denying that the interest this man takes in the business is a source of pleasure to him ; but we cannot suppose one of the parties in the cause, though his interest must be infinitely more lively, to feel an equal pleasure, because the painful passions are in him really roused, while in the other sympathy alone is excited, which is in itself pleasing. It is pretty much the same with the spectator of a tragedy. And, if the sympathy is the more pleasing, it is because the actions are so much the more calculated to entrap the attention, and the object so much the more worthy. The pleasure is heightened also in both instances by a kind of intuitive recollection, which never forsakes the spectator, that no bad consequences will result to him from the action he is surveying. The recollection is the more predominant in the spectator of a tragedy, as it is impossible in any case totally to banish from his memory that the scenes are fictitious and illusive. In real life we always advert to futurity, and endeavour to draw inferences of the probable consequences ; but the moment we take off our minds from what is passing on the stage to reasonings there-upon, the illusion is dispelled, and it again recurs that it is all fiction.

If we compare the degrees of pleasure we derive from the perusal of a novel and the representation

of a tragedy, we shall observe a wonderful disparity. In both we feel an interest, in both sympathy is excited. But in the one, things are merely *related* to us as *having passed*, which it is not attempted to persuade us ever did *in reality* happen, and from which, therefore, we never can deceive ourselves into the idea that any consequences whatever will result; in the other, on the contrary, the actions themselves pass before our eyes; we are not tempted to ask ourselves whether they *did* ever happen; we see them happen, we are the witnesses of them; and were it not for the meliorating circumstances before mentioned, the sympathy would become so powerful as to be in the highest degree painful.

In tragedy, therefore, everything which can strengthen the illusion should be introduced, for there are a thousand drawbacks on the effect, which it is impossible to remove, and which have always so great a force, as to put it out of the power of the poet to excite sympathy in a too painful degree. Everything that is improbable, everything which is out of the common course of nature, should, for this reason, be avoided, as nothing will so forcibly remind the spectator of the unrealness of the illusion.

It is a mistaken idea, that we sympathize sooner with the distresses of kings and illustrious personages, than with those of common life. Men are, in fact, more inclined to commiserate the sufferings of their equals, than of those whom they cannot but regard rather with awe than pity, as superior beings, and to take an interest in incidents which might have

happened to themselves sooner than in those remote from their own rank and habits. It is for this reason that Æschylus censures Euripides for introducing his kings in rags, as if they were more to be compassionate than other men ;

πρῶτον μὲν τοὺς βασιλεύοντας ῥάκι' ἀμπισχών, ἔν'  
ἐλεῖνοι  
τοῖς ἀνθρώποις φαίνοντ' εἶναι. (Ar. *Ranae* 1063f.)

Some will, perhaps, imagine that it is in the power of the poet to excite our sympathy in too powerful a degree, because, at the representation of certain scenes, the spectators are frequently affected so as to make them shriek out with terror. But this is not sympathy ; it is horror, it is disgust, and is only witnessed when some act is committed on the stage so cruel and bloody, as to make it impossible to contemplate it, even in idea, without horror.

Nec pueros coram populo Medea trucidet,  
Aut humana palam coquat exta nefarius Atreus.

Hor. *Ars Poet.*, l. 185

It is for this reason, also, that many fine German dramas cannot be brought on the English stage, such as the *Robbers* of Schiller, and the *Adelaide of Wulfingen*, by Kotzebue : they are too horrible to be *read* without violent emotions, and Horace will tell you what an immense difference there is in point of effect between a relation and a representation.

Segnius irritant animos demissa per aurem,  
Quam quæ sunt oculis subjecta fidelibus, et quæ  
Ipse sibi tradit spectator. *Ars Poet.*, l. 180.

I shall conclude these desultory remarks, strung together at random, without order or connexion, by observing what little foundation there is for the general outcry in the literary world, against the prevalence of German dramas on our stage. Did they not possess uncommon merit, they would not meet with such general approbation. Fashion has but a partial influence, but they have drawn tears from an audience in a barn as well as in a theatre royal; they have been welcomed with plaudits in every little market-town in the three kingdoms, as well as in the metropolis. Nature speaks but one language; she is alike intelligible to the peasant and the man of letters, the tradesman and the man of fashion. While the Muse of Germany shall continue to produce such plays as *The Stranger* and *Lovers' Vows*<sup>1</sup>, who will not rejoice that translation is able to naturalize her efforts in our language?

<sup>1</sup> I speak of these plays only as adapted to our stage by the elegant pens of Mr Thompson and Mrs Inchbald.



## NOTES

PAGE    LINE

### CLIFTON GROVE

- 13    230 *Progne*, who was turned into a swallow, is apparently confused with her sister Philomela, who was transformed to a nightingale. Compare Johnson's *Autumn*, l. 20, 'As Progne pours the melting lay'.
- 21    466 '*Oswego's swamps*.' Vide Goldsmith's *Traveller*, l. 411, 'Where Wild Oswego spreads her swamps around.'
- 21    469 *Tejo*. Teos or Teios, a town of the Ionian confederacy. Birthplace of Anacreon.

### MY STUDY

- 42    61 *Pope, or Coke, or Burn*. The reference is presumably to either Pope the poet, or Walter Pope the Astronomer, and to Sir Ed. Coke and Richard Burn, both eminent lawyers and legal writers.

### THE EVE OF DEATH

- 55    The influence of Ossian in this poem is marked. Morven (Fingal) and Colma are characters in the Ossianic poems.

### ODE TO H. FUSELI

- 64    Johan Henrich Fuessli (1741-1825), painter and illustrator of Milton, etc. He changed his name to Fuseli. Vide also l. 47.
- 64    22 *Helicé*, i.e. Ursa Major, The Great Bear.
- 66    56 *Strook*, i.e. struck.

## PAGE LINE

- 66 68 *Hresvelger*. The Giant Hrasvelg, of Scandinavian mythology. He keeps watch on the north side of the root of the tree of the world, to devour the dead. His shape is that of an eagle, and winds and storms are caused by the movements of his wings. (Brewer).

## TO CONTEMPLATION

- 70 2 *Lapponian*, i.e. Laplandish.

## GENIUS

- 81 55 *Sulmo's bard*. Ovid.  
81 57 *By him*. Chatterton.

## TO THE MOON

- 84 14 *Favonian*. Favonius, the west wind.

## NELSONI MORS

- 90 19 *Aganippe's well*. A fountain at the foot of Helicon, sacred to the muses.

## TIME

- 121 481 *Salem*, the ancient name for Jerusalem.

## THE CHRISTIAD

- 133 19 *Solyma*, also an ancient name for Jerusalem.  
134 41 *Urania*, one of the nine muses.  
134 54-55 *Right o'er the Euxine, and that gulf which late  
The rude Massagatæ adored—*

The Massagatæ were a wild race of Scythian tent-dwellers. They were by some reputed to have lived on the borders of the Caspian Sea, which is probably the 'gulf' referred to, and which, in the imagination of the ancients, had subterraneous communication with the Euxine Sea.

- 137 109 *Boreal*, northern.

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